

THE ONLINE IDENTITY FORMATION OF THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF POWER RELATIONS
AND SUBJECT POSITIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

The current study examined over 3000 visual images on the homepages of 234 National University to determine how power relations are depicted. Using a hybrid methodology of grounded theory, critical discursive analysis, and facial prominence scoring, the work culminates in a theory: The (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online. The theory holds that colleges used different tactics, strategies, and resources when depicting various subject positions on their homepages.

Dedicated to my father, Gary Massie, whose humility, hard work, and perseverance shaped my past in important ways, and to my wife, Blerta, and son, Xavier, who inspire, motivate, and push me to keep growing

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS STUDIED AND WHAT ANSWERS ARE SOUGHT

A student diligently studying in a window sill, a red brick historical building with four, white, Ionic columns guarding its entrance, a group of students sitting on the green grass of a quad attentively listening to a professor passionately lecture, and a determined running back fighting through tackles in a football game: These are all images found on university homepages. A variety of others not traditionally associated with higher education can also be seen: a hiker poised at the summit of a mountain, a priest standing happily next to a newly married couple, magazine covers of *US News and World Report* or the *Princeton Review*, and a fly fisherman wading into a stream. These images as well as numerous others are the online visual material propagated on universities' homepages.

As images, they construct a certain type of visual rhetoric. Like all rhetoric, there is a persuasive quality to such images. They visually construct not only how the institutions are identified or formulated but, maybe more importantly, “argue” for how individuals within their frame should be ontologically “seen.” In short, power is manifested on two levels: the institutional and the individual. Much like how Foss, Foss, and Trapp (1985) argue that feminist scholars see power as making men centered and marginalizing women, this research addresses how the visual elements on university homepages center some groups while marginalizing others. Expanding such logic more broadly to incorporate all visual representations that depict “an asymmetrical distribution of power” and “power differences” (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1985, p. 317), this work intends

to critically investigate the images found on university homepages and seeks answers to such questions as: When an image has a speaker and an audience, what is the subject position of the one who has been visually shown to have “voice” and what is the makeup of his/her audience? What is the subject position of those, like teachers, coaches, and administrators, who are signified as authorities? In images centered on displaying success, is there a consistent group that is shown? Are there any subject positions that are consistently absent? In short, how is power, broadly conceived, expressed within the institutional images? Who has it and in what contexts?

Given these questions, this work contributes to such fields of inquiry as feminism and gender studies, critical race theory, disability studies, and the spaces of intersection between these fields. Each of these fields gives only a partial explanation of disparities between groups and often offer superficial accounts of power relations. For example, feminists make it widely known that women generally have an average salary that is lower than their male counterparts. Examining economic indicators more closely, one finds that, according to an Associated Press report (2005), the variation of average salary for female college graduates is such that Asian females (\$43,700) and Black females (\$41,100) make more than White females (\$37,800). Differences like these also occur between male groups. The AP report also points out that Hispanic males with college degrees earn (\$49,000) more than Black males (\$45,000). Such incongruities are not limited to economic variables but also occur within social, political, and cultural comparisons. This example helps demonstrate that more explanatory power exists as one examines the intersection of subject position variables. This confluence, however, produces complexity, which cannot be understood without looking at the individual

pieces (i.e., race, class, and gender); thus, I focus on power distinctions of individual representations and relational depictions as to generate a theory: The (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online.

The online identity construction of institutions of higher education is another area of focus. While this focus may overlap the previous fields, it also opens discussion about how educational institutions visually manage their online profile and what these constructions suggest about the ideology of higher education in the United States.

Individual schools within the system may promote different ideologies and may have greater or lesser brand recognition than their peer organizations. To better grasp these distinctions, we must examine corporate branding and its academic equivalent.

Well-known organizations, corporations, and businesses often construct their “brand” through visual images. Jenkins (2008) points out,

Corporations fuel the image-age by promulgating brand images in every possible medium [e.g., websites]...[and they] turned to the manufacture of images due to their inherent ideological power—namely, the ability to represent an abstraction in concrete garb. At its heart, a corporation is nothing more than an abstraction...Developing a corporate image allows this abstraction to appear as reality, as a living being with a particular ethos and character. (p. 466)

Additionally, Jenkins (2008) argues, “Of course, corporations turned to images because of their ability to naturalize the ideological...[yet] behind the seemingly natural images hides the interests and systems of power” (p. 467). One can apply this argument to higher education in two distinct ways. First, one can note how universities perform similar “branding,” which makes them like corporations. Second, one can posit that as corporations manage, create, and maintain their own individual images, they also act as a conglomerate to construct the image of a given industry. Blending these two rationales,

the online image construction of individual colleges coalesces into the formation of an overall image of “higher education” in the United States.

Much like well-known organizations and businesses, universities work to create and maintain their “brand,” which serves as a promise. As Carey (2010) points out, there are overwhelming differences in the branding of colleges. For example, the (online) University of Phoenix has a “brand deficit,” and Harvard University has a “brand surplus.” The schools in this study are more apt to have “brand surplus” than “brand deficit” due to their inclusion in the *US News*’ rankings as “National Universities,” which denote schools with national name recognition. There are, however, varying degrees of “brand strength,” which is partially manifest in the rankings themselves—for example, institutions that are in tier one, like Harvard, have greater brand strength or name recognition than a tier four school like Nova Southeastern University (FL). Addressing academia, Jenkins (1992) argues, “There are surely few social worlds where power depends so strongly on belief, where it is so true that, in the words of Hobbes, ‘Reputation of power is power.’ Reputation is, therefore, symbolic capital –which is, in the right contexts, translatable into other kinds of capital—within the academic field” (p. 158). Although reputation can appear to be an abstraction, it does have material consequences. Kaplan (2009) points out that the success of college graduates, especially in engineering and accounting, is intricately linked to the reputation of their alma mater.

Having addressed the significance of power relations to the current research as well as the importance placed on the schools under examination via their branding, we turn to make clear why the images used by the schools are significant and worthy of investigation.

Why Study University Images?: A Rationale

“In this swirl of imagery, seeing is much more than believing. It is not just a part of everyday life, it is everyday life” (Mirzoeff, 2000, p. 1).

Imagine an individual going to a specific university’s homepage. Given a reasonably high speed Internet connection, the images found on the page are instantaneously addressable by the viewer whereas the text on the page must be actively engaged. This phenomenon makes us aware of the prevalence that images have over text in such a setting. In short, the images are more readily taken in by a viewer.

Sontag (2006) argues that the central activity of “modern” society is explicitly linked to the production and consumption of images, and that such images have the power to substitute for “firsthand experience” (p. 250). Sontag has elsewhere argued (1977) that “something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we’re shown a photograph of it” (p. 5). As evidence, the image even begins to supersede reality. “It is as though,” Macey (2000) points out, “we believe that, if we wish to know someone, we should look at their photograph rather than their face” (p. 406). McLuhan (1964) expresses this as well: “Awareness of the transforming power of the photo is often embodied in popular stories like the one about the admiring friend who said, ‘My, that’s a fine child you have there!’ Mother: ‘Oh, that’s nothing. You should see his photograph’” (p. 188).

Wishing to know more about a specific university, prospective students are, themselves, coming to images that become “evidence” of what to expect from the school, the “face” of the university, and a “substitute for [the] firsthand experience” of a campus visit, which may not be possible for low-income individuals. Here, one finds that the images “are seen as not just ‘mediating’ reality but actually constructing experience and acquiring identity” (McQuail, 2000, p. 307). The prospective students begin to identify

the images *as* the university regardless of the validity or accuracy of the representations. Universities—like their corporate counterparts—are not solely identified by their buildings and other physical aspects but rather exist as abstractions that are often given shape by the images they perpetuate (Jenkins, 2008). Thus, one need not be concerned with a realist ontology that would seek to find how accurately institutions represent themselves but rather one should work from a hermeneutic (interpretative) approach that questions *what is itself* constructed.

If the images represent the institution, then what is represented becomes important. As institutions associated with the dominant, cultural interests, university homepages could be expected to use images directed to those interests. Lechte (1994) points out,

[Bourdieu's] abiding thesis is that the dominant class does not dominate overtly: it does not force the dominated to conform to its will. Nor does it dominate in capitalist society through a conspiracy where the privileged would consciously manipulate reality in accordance with their own self-interest. Rather, the dominant class in capitalist society is, statistically, the beneficiary of economic, social and *symbolic* power, power which is embodied in economic and cultural capital, and which is imbricated throughout society's institutions and practices and *reproduced by these very institutions and practices*. (p. 45; emphasis added)

Tension exists at this point between the “actual” system of higher education and the “utopian” version of it. Bourdieu (1996) argues the “elite schools” use the tactics of “*separation and aggregation*...[as a means] to produce a *consecrated* elite, that is, an elite that is not only distinct and separate, but also recognized by others and by itself as worthy of being so” (p. 102). This phenomenon has material consequences. One, therefore, can see the “actual” performance of institutions of higher education reinscribing power; however, there is also a utopian vision of education.

In the utopian version of higher education, the access to the power and status provided by attending an elite school is available to all or most people. Land grant institutions are supposed to be the embodiment of this dream, but these institutions, unlike their community college counterparts, are also selective. Furthermore, one need only reflect on the schools listed as “National Universities” by *US News* to see that, of the 234 institutions, only 67 (or approximately 29%) are land grant institutions. Thus, we find overwhelmingly that institutions of higher education serve only a select few and give them an opportunity to access and obtain greater status and power.

The selectivity of elite schools combined with the (assumed) material benefits of obtaining a degree from them makes such schools hegemonic institutions. “Hegemony,” Brooker (1999) contends, “seeks to articulate and renew the prevailing ‘common sense’ mentality in society as a whole” (p. 99). Simply put, once an institution establishes a “strong” brand, they must maintain it as to make it appear “common sense.” To do this, universities must work to control their messages that are publicly accessible. Institutions of higher education, thus, seek to construct the dominant discourses about themselves. “Dominant discourses are,” Brooker (1999) argues, “understood as in turn reinforced by existing systems of law, education[,] and media” (p. 67). Here, the images on university websites--as connected to both education and media—do not solely *produce* power distinctions but also reinscribe such “dominant discourses.” In short, one can see university websites as spaces in which the hegemonic institutions can construct and preserve their narrative.

Since schools use their websites to sustain their narrative, the sites provide a rich space, particularly the homepages of the institutions, to perform a critical analysis. In

doing a critical analysis, the analyst works to discover and disclose the power relations expressed by hegemonic institutions. Focusing on the dominant discourses promoted by the institutions, critical analysis examines how the dominant group reinscribes itself. “Power,” Foss, Foss, and Trapp (1991), make clear, “is exercised through communicative forms” (p. 264). By investigating the “communicative form” of the visual depictions on university homepages, one can begin to see how the institutions exert their power. Thus, critical analysis functions to show not only what is depicted but also makes explicit the (often implicit) tactics, means, and strategies used by institutions to reaffirm their power.

The goal of the study was to generate an empirically-based theory about how power relations, on university homepages, are manifested and by what means. In the end, the (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online is promoted. The theory shows that divergent strategies are used when representing different subjectivities. In order to better understand the starting premises of the study that bring about the theory, one must be aware of the questions that guide the critical analysis.

Guiding Questions

This section explicates what questions are guiding the work. It begins by addressing how previous research on university homepages has focused on questions that initially appear similar to those that drive this study; however, one finds upon deeper inspection that, while the initial questions are similar, the methods used and answers obtained are significantly distinct.

The research by Boyer et al. (2006) is a good starting point for analyzing institutions’ images. Their work examines such questions as “are women visually represented?” and “are minorities visually depicted?” These questions initiate the

analysis of institutional homepages but also only address *if* groups are shown rather than *how* groups are displayed. Of course, one cannot address the “how” of representation, if all such groups are absent, but the initial viewing of the images under investigation clearly showed *that* various groups were depicted. With such diverse depictions, one is lead to the very type of questions answered by this research. Therefore, a nonexhaustive list of investigated questions follows:

- How are women represented?
- How are men displayed?
- How are those from distinct racial groups shown?
- How are women of the various racial groups depicted?
- How are men of the numerous racial groups represented?
- Do visual images of women share any common pattern?
- Do depictions of men hold any pattern?
- Do representations of racial groups hold any consistent pattern?
- In images where authority is present (e.g., teacher, coach, or administrator), what is the subject position of those shown in the “power” position?
- Are individuals with disabilities shown in images? If so, how are they depicted?
- Is any group represented in a specific context more often than other groups?
- Within images where power distinctions are evident, what is the relationship between the subject position of the “empowered” and that of the “subordinate” (e.g., teacher/student or coach/player)?
- What subject position is shown most often in portraits?
- What subject position has the highest, average facial prominence within their portraits?

With these questions, one is--much like Bourdieu’s (1988) examination of the centralized, French system of higher education in *Homo Academicus*--attempting to highlight the (hierarchical) relations within the decentered American system of higher education. These questions inherently beg for answers. But, how should one go about coming to answers to such vexing and important questions, when the number of images skyrockets above 3000? One needs a methodology that can focus on the relational elements rather than only the descriptive accounting of such individuals. While methods like psychoanalysis, semiotic analysis, and compositional study could aid in

understanding the richness of representation within a given image, the size and scope of the current work is too grand to follow such methods.

Multiple methods were coordinated to address the scope and focus of the current study. Chapter 2 will make explicit the methods employed, explain the rationale for their use, give an overview of them, and account for how they were appropriated within the study.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Schneider and Foot (2004) argue, “Web-based media require new methods of analyzing form and content, along with processes and patterns of production, distribution, usage and interpretation” (p. 116). The current study is no exception. This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the various methods used as well as a detailed roadmap of what was done during the study.

Overview of the Methods

A hybrid methodology that combined a grounded theory approach with discursive analysis and facial prominence scoring was used for this study. One could consider it a two-tiered system of analysis whereby grounded theory filtered and organized the source to make it more manageable and, then, the discursive approach, in conjunction with facial prominence scoring, examined the produced classes and categories as to highlight possible meanings at the intersection of representation, subject position, and power. The following subsections explicate the various methods.

The Grounded Theory Approach

This section describes grounded theory as an approach instrumental to this research. It begins with an overview of grounded theory by demonstrating the central aspects of it. Finally, the section draws attention to how the approach can be appropriated for visual artifacts like those in the current study.

Grounded theory was originally promoted by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) in their work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. They examined how nurses communicated about the “social loss” of patients who had died and employed a “new” method for understanding this phenomenon. At the center of their work was a desire to move away from the verification mentality prevalent in sociology research, which focused on “testing” theory. “Previous books on methods of social research,” Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued, “have focused mainly on how to verify theory” (p. 1). In contrast, the authors sought a means to generate theory from data.

Using grounded theory, one begins with a problem that presents a rich field from which theory might be generated. This generative process is directed by emergent coding of the site, field notes, texts or whatever are the “data” appropriate to the problem. Emergent coding, unlike standard content analysis which develops a code set from theory and then uses trained coders to locate them in the data, extracts its code set from engagement with the data. Both the process of coding and the emergent code set then form the resources for the contribution to theory.

Grounded theory coding works a process of similarity and difference. As Dey (1999) claimed, “Categories are to be generated by comparing one incident [e.g., an image] with another and then by comparing new incidents [or images] with the emergent categories” (p. 7). As new incidents arise in the coding process, they have the potential to do one of three things. First, they may fit into previously constructed codes. Second, they may not fit into the codes that have been generated up to that point, and, as such, they will generate a new code. Third, they may challenge a preexisting code in such a way that it must be adjusted to accommodate them. This constant comparison process is a central

aspect of grounded theory and continues until one reaches “saturation” where new incidents provide no further codes.

Theory does not suddenly emerge after saturation has occurred in the coding process, however. Rather, theory begins to initially emerge *during* the coding process. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that “different categories and their properties tend to become integrated through [coding, which] force the analyst to make some related theoretical sense of each comparison” (p. 109). Theory, then, is perpetually adjusted, much like the codes themselves, as new incidents are examined. Thus, the first iteration of the theory that emerges is “highly tentative,” and has explanatory power for only the subset of data analyzed to that point. Through adapting to new incidents, the theory becomes less tentative. By the end of the process, the emergent theory has significant explanatory value because it has evolved to accommodate the totality of the data. The final result, then, is a theory grounded in the data or “grounded theory.”

Grounded Theorists Working With Visual Materials

Grounded theory methodology has held a steady presence in the literature (see Benoliel, 1996; Dey, 1999; McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007), but according to Clarke (2005), “few grounded theorists have studied visual discourse” (p. xxxix). Clarke (2005) and Figueroa (2008) are two of the few scholars who have. The following subsections address these scholars. I begin with Figueroa’s work, which has a broader theoretical frame and, then explicate Clarke’s research, which is more specific in nature.

Figueroa’s contribution to advancing grounded theory into visual media. Silvana Figueroa (2008) centered not on any specific artifact but rather addressed the methodological adaptation of grounded theory to a new sphere of study. She made

explicit two possible ways qualitative researchers come to the visual—“as a ‘lens’ or as the phenomenon itself” (p. 1). For her research, she labeled these the audio-visual as medium (AVM) and audio-visual as object (AVO) perspectives, respectively. Figueroa (2008) was uninterested in the AVM perspective and used it simply for contrast.

Figueroa’s goal was to produce a “contribution [which] proposes some modifications so that [grounded theory] can be adapted for the analysis of what will be called here the AVO (audio-visual data as an object of analysis) perspective” (p. 2).

Figueroa contended that the AVO-perspective focuses not on the creation of audio-visual texts--an AVM approach--but rather on the narratives within such texts that are formed through its language, images, and/or music. Here, we see it is not the production of the content but rather the content itself.

Following the “standard” format of grounded theory, Figueroa (2008) notes the first step in data analysis is open coding “with a generative question in mind” (p. 6). A potential flaw of the AVO-perspective was that it moved from concrete and specific concepts to less concrete and global categories. In doing so, Figueroa (2008) claims that it would “break the unity (the structure) of the text too soon, before any deep interpretation had been achieved” (p. 7). Thus, she postulated that analysis of the visual should begin looking at the whole rather than specific instances. To resolve this issue, she argued to “reverse the coding paradigm” (p. 8) of grounded theory by moving from broad framework of concepts to more specific instances rather than taking specific cases and grouping them into conceptually congruent broad frames.

Figueroa’s research is theoretical rather than practical in nature. Working in broad strokes, she allows one to see the *general* inherent character of applying grounded theory

methods to visual artifacts. Her work, however, does not address specific pictorial instances within visual cases; thus, it serves to introduce the intersection of grounded theory and visual communication but does not apply a definitive method for doing so. In contrast, Clarke's (2005) research explicated procedures for dealing with specific, visual materials.

Clarke's method for applying grounded theory to the visual. Clarke (2005) also argued that grounded theorists working with visual materials should begin with a broad frame and move to a more specific one. She contended that memos or field notes, which are written accounts of what the researcher perceives, are important. Though first impressions are self-explanatory and are documented with quick notes, the big picture, for Clarke (2005), "describes the visual fully...[and demands] actually writing a narrative description of the image(s) [that] will make you 'see' more clearly, elaborately, and precisely" (p. 226). In the "little pictures" part, Clarke argued that the analysts should repeat the previous "big picture" process but do it *within* each image by dividing the image up in some rational way (e.g., via halves or quadrants). The final memo for Clarke was the specification memo, but it is difficult to explain and is similar to compositional analysis. According to Clarke (2005), the specification memo seeks to "get outside the frame through which we are *supposed* to view that image" (p. 227). It asks questions like: what is foregrounded/backgrounded? How is color used? Is everything present you expect to be present?

This study followed the advice of Clarke (2005) and Figueroa (2008) and worked from broad to specific; however, it also reframed some of the central concepts as to shift the linguistically-constructed ontology away from the social scientific and objectivist

paradigms.

Appropriating Grounded Theory

Though the study's methods resemble traditional grounded theory in many ways, the approach was adapted to the given nature of the task at hand. This adaptation follows the Straus and Corbin line in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2007) more so than the more open Glaserian line. My appropriation led to changes that may initially seem subtle or semantic; however, with each change, a rationale is provided. I addressed those elements necessary to the function of grounded theory. These elements included "the initial focus and drive," "the evidentiary source," "groupings/coding," "the constant comparative method," and "pattern/tension recognition." Some of these terms are not used by grounded theorists, and this act is intentional. To clarify these changes, I explain each element individually and, then, systematically demonstrate how each was combined and used in this study.

Initial focus. Dey (1999) makes clear that grounded theory will develop a "core category" (p. 9) or "main story line" that is crystallized and solidified via analysis. The story line should be "abstract enough to encompass all that has been described in the story" (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 120). The story line is utilized to pull together the work at the end but also functions to focus the researcher at the beginning of the work. This "core" idea I call the "*initial* focus and drive." The initial focus and drive of this study—highlighted by the "guiding questions" in Chapter 1--sought out the online, visual representations on university homepages of power and subject-position. In short, the initial focus and drive answers: "why the researcher wishes to look at this" and "what

storyline consistently drives the research.” However, we are still left with the all important “how?”

The evidentiary source. Words are ideological. “Anything which one names,” Sartre (1977) argues, “is already no longer quite the same; it has lost its innocence” (p. 22). In this study, the loss of innocence came in the labels of text and data. Text promotes an ontological bias toward rhetorical and literary theory; conversely, the term “data” prompts such a bias toward the social scientific. Here, alleviation of any contamination of meaning signifiers have with others working in grounded theory appears warranted. Thus, I have used the term “evidentiary source” or “source” to denote that which is the basis from which evidence is drawn. The *source* for this study was all images captured from the homepages of the 234 nationally-ranked universities. Knowing the evidentiary source, we turn, now, to address the important concept of “groupings/coding.”

Groupings/coding. Since the source is so large, it had to be segregated into manageable units or groups. It would have been inefficient to simply marshal through the 3220 files seeking to find our “initial focus and drive,” so I devised a structured means in which to organize the source. A group is comprised of any division of images from the source sharing a common theme. Although “traditional” grounded theory uses the term “coding” to denote the process by which such groups are constructed, I thought it more fitting to remove this term and substitute it with others. The use of term “coding” for qualitative analyses is a misappropriation of its use in quantitative methods (Dey, 1999). Dey demonstrates this, “we think of ‘encoding’ as method of translating language into a secret set of symbols, whose meaning can only be divulged by ‘cracking the code’” (p. 129). This promotes the wrong idea about what is going on, so I worked to make the

language more in line with the methods being implemented. My implementation will follow Dey (1999) who argues qualitative researchers should use the term “categorizing,” since this is more accurate to the process that is occurring and also “opens the door to a much wider interpretation of what this involves” (p. 130). Bourdieu (2001) notes that “the word ‘category’ sometimes seems appropriate because it has the advantage of designating both a social unit—the category of farmers—and a cognitive structure and of showing the link between them” (p. 8-9). One group generated from the source is categories; however, another type of group also was produced.

The other type of group was called “class” and was developed via classification. Classifying was the first surgical act on the source and occurred before any categorizing took place. So, what is the difference? To make a class, the analyst is merely being descriptive. Given the source, the first act of classifying generated “has people” and “lacks people” classes of images. Not all classification will fall into such binaries. In fact, the grouping of the source were more likely multivalent than bivalent. This stage of grouping was essential to finding “what is there?”

In contrast to the descriptive nature of classifying, categorizing works to seek out what is indicated by not evident. Much of the work on grounded theory centers on this interpretive aspect; however, one should not overlook the use of classification in making the source a more manageable unit of analysis. Following the suggestions by Clarke (2005) and Figueroa (2008), this project began with a broad frame and worked to become more detailed.

To provide a brief example that demonstrates the distinction between classes and categories, let us imagine a photo of a young man on a sidewalk talking to a young

woman. I would classify the image as “individuals outdoors on campus.” Such a class is merely descriptive and does not aid in any interpretive investigation of the depiction. I could, then, have categorized the same image as “social interaction” as opposed to maybe “pedagogical interaction.”

It is important to realize that categories emerge not only from classes but through “connecting and integrating [categories themselves]” (Dey, 1999, p.147), which is often labeled axial and selective coding. Though both a class and a category as groups helped limit the size of the initial source, I began by constructing all classes first, then turned to categories. What good is it to make a bunch of groups from the source? The answer lies with the method of constant comparison, which follows.

The constant comparative method. The constant comparative method is at the heart of grounded theory. It is a general method whereby the researcher constantly compares groups from the source. The method of constant comparison works in conjunction with grouping. Let’s begin with an illustration of the method independent of groups to demonstrate the utility of said groups. Imagine an apple (A), boat (B), camera (C), and dynamite (D) yielding comparisons AB, AC, AD, BC, BD, and CD. These comparisons are such that AB is identical to BA. Thus, the four units yield six comparisons. Mathematically, the formula for determining the number of comparisons from units is “ n ” (the number of units to compare) multiplied by “ $n-1$ ” divided by 2 equals “ x ” (the number of comparisons necessary to compare each unit to every other unit). Using the formula, I found that if our 3220 files for this study have only one image each, I would have needed to do 5,137,615 comparisons. This was a virtual impossibility. Thus, groups were constructed to alleviate the workload by pooling similar units together.

Pattern/tension recognition. Grounded theory is an approach which seeks to identify emergent patterns that are recognizable and meaningful. Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that patterns are “repeated relationships between properties [i.e., classes] and dimensions of categories” (p. 130). Thus, “the observation of patterns,” argues Dey (1999), “is part and parcel of theory generation” (p. 139).

Pattern as a term is a loose signifier. Dey (1999) had difficulty answering how we identify patterns and how new software tools will be able to do so. Finally, he concludes, “[s]ubsequent debates...have wrestled with these issues, but without resolving them” (p. 145). Though I may not have resolved this debate either, I thought of the following strategies for seeking patterns from the source, classes, and categories.

When you think of pattern, you may think of an arrangement of the fibers of a sweater that creates a recognition of a positive presence. In addition, I divided presence into what I call “pattern” and “tension.” A pattern was a similarity across classifications or categories, and a tension was a difference among them. Patterns and tensions are relational in nature and are found *between* classes and categories.

There also must be an awareness of absence. Dey (1999) stated, “what is missing from our evidence may sometimes be more revealing than what is present” (p. 139). Clearly, the absence of persons of color or of one gender or another speaks its truths with equal force as the representations that appear in the images. Absence may be as strategic as presence. Every presence requires the absence of all else that could be in that place.

The production of classes, categories, tensions, patterns, and absences via grounded theory was really simply the development of a “system of elements” to which a critical, discursive analysis could be done. Foucault (1973) claimed, “A ‘system of

elements’—a definition of the segments by which the resemblances and differences can be shown, the types of variation by which those segments can be affected, and, lastly, the threshold above which there is a difference and below which there is a similitude—is indispensable for the establishment of even the simplest form of order” (p. xx). It is this manufactured order that was examined via discursive analysis.

Discursive Analysis

The term “discourse” appears to exist in a web of signification that ranges from “language” and “rhetoric” to “speech,” “symbolicity,” and, even, “ideology.” Defining discourse, Brooker (1999) stated that discourse designates “the forms of representation, conventions and habits of language use producing specific fields of culturally and historically located meanings” (pp. 66-67). This makes discourse, according to Macey (2000, p. 100), “an intersubjective phenomenon.” In short, discourse is a social production.

Eagleton (1996) distinguishes discourse from language in stating, “‘Language’ is speech or writing viewed ‘objectively,’ a chain of signs without a subject. ‘Discourse’ means language grasped as *utterance*, as involving speaking and writing subjects and therefore, also, at least potentially, readers or listeners” (p. 100). Here, language—which is the totality of unexpressed signification and symbolicity—is only made “manifest” through discourse. Conversely, discourse is “involving,” which highlights its participatory aspect. Thus, one can define discourse as language performed and consumed by human agents who are located as speaking and writing, hearing and reading subjects.

Human agents are not, however, solely speaking and writing, hearing and reading

subjects. They are also consumers and producers of visual material. Although the bulk of previous, discourse analysis literature has focused on oral and textual content, the following subsection will begin to address how the method of discourse analysis is applicable to visual artifacts as well.

Discourse Analysis: An Overview

Discursive analysis is a general approach to analyzing and examining written and spoken language use. This method, however, has also been used as a means for deciphering visual media (e.g., photographs and film). McPhee (1988) contended, citing a presentation by Bullock (1987), that photographs can be understood as “fossils or tracks” (p.491) that have a place in human experience. Discourse is a rhetorical dimension within a story/text/image that persuades or manipulates the reader (or viewer). Here, one quickly realizes not only the impact that discourse can have but also that the very nature of discourse is consubstantial with power relations. Notably, such consubstantiation moves us from the use of discourse analysis in such fields as translation studies and linguistics into a form of discourse analysis that is critical. Thus, this section concludes with a broad overview of discourse analysis, the following section explicates the relation between power and discourse.

Discourse analysis focuses on “discursive practice[s] within institutional and social contexts” (Sonderling, 1994, p. 12) and can include “critical examinations of how mass media texts shape ideologies” (Biesecker, 2007, p.8). As Geertz (1983) points out, “To see social institutions, social customs, social changes as in some sense ‘readable’ is to alter our whole sense of what such interpretation is and shift it towards modes of

thought rather more familiar to the translator, the exegete, or the iconographer than to the test giver, the factor analyst, or the pollster” (p. 31).

Within institutional contexts, Foucault focused on “discursive formations” and “discursive practices.” These were analyzed to determine “the kinds of statement[s] associated with particular institutions and their way of establishing orders of truth, or what is accepted as ‘reality’ in a given society” (Brooker 1999, p. 67). As such, the visual depictions on university homepages are “discursive formations” promoted by the given institutions of higher education to construct a given “reality.”

Since such manufacturing of “reality” is contentious, one finds that discourse analysis focuses on the “question of the signifier, not of the signified” (Eagleton, 1996, p. 175). “Discourse itself,” Eagleton (1996) makes clear, “has no definite signified, which is not to say that it embodies no assumptions: it is rather a network of signifiers able to envelop a whole field of meanings, objects and practices” (p. 175). Thus, it is through analyzing this “network of signifiers” that one begins to see potential, often conflicting, meanings. It also, therefore, highlights social constructivist ontology rather than a realist or material one.

To examine the “network of signifiers” for the current study, I enlisted the use of a functional metaphor: the child’s picture book. Using such a metaphor as a cognitive schema for analyzing the images via the constant comparative approach provided a means for organizing a semicohesive narrative. It is important to realize that the meanings within the narrative shifted from one “chapter” of the child’s picture book (i.e., topic or context of images) to the next; thus, there was no metanarrative to bring all the chapters in sync--only turbulences, disruptions, and counter flows culminated to create

the “text.” In short, one does not find a modern plot *line* but rather a postmodern, rhizomatic *amalgam*. As Brooker (1999) makes clear, “An established ‘discursive formation’ is in fact defined by the *contradictory* discourses it contains and this tolerance Foucault understands as a sign of stability rather than—as it would be understood in Marxism, for example—of conflict and potential change” (p. 67; emphasis added).

The use of the functional metaphor of a child’s picture book did not simply open a method of interpretation but also created a challenge. Foucault’s focus on “the sequential elements of syntax” and Cheney and Thompkins’ (1988) discourse analysis of the US bishops’ pastoral letter on war and peace benefit from the temporal and spatial linearity provided by writing. This seemingly fixed “sequentiality” available in print becomes diffuse, polymorphous, and nonlinear on the web thereby opening new challenges to interpretation. In short, the images of this study followed no distinct, logical sequence or pattern. Thus, the research worked thematically and topically to pull together “bits and pieces” that were similar rather than sequentially.

The examination of images focused entirely on the visual aspects rather than any text and sought to determine a *likely* narrative for the “picture book” or a chapter within it. There was one exception to this where text is noteworthy; however, this exception does not focus on the meaning of the text but rather on the placement of the text *visually* within the image. In short, it would not matter what words/letters were there, only that they were visually present *there* and not elsewhere.

Discourse as/and Power

“Discursive constitution,” Jasinski (1998) argued, “specifies the way textual practices structure or establish conditions of possibility, enabling *and* constraining

subsequent thought and action in ways similar to the operation of rules in a game” (p. 75). Those who make the “rules of a game” hold inherent power; moreover, those who control “textual practices” wield power as well. This section not only establishes the relation between discourse and power but also makes explicit the identity of power as manifested in the work of Foucault. In short, it begins with establishing how discourse relates to power; then, it focuses on how power has “traditionally” been conceived and how it should be understood according to Foucault.

Any act of discourse must inevitably represent as well as promote some knowledge base. Here, discourse represents and presupposes knowledge. “In one way or another, all symbol systems,” Ricoeur (1996) purports, “contribute to *shaping* reality” (p. 142). Since discourse and knowledge “shape” reality, they can never be completely “innocent” because they must select some aspects to “shape” and not others—much like a photographer frames an event. For Foucault (1980), knowledge and power are intricately linked or conjoined; thus, he used the phrase “power/knowledge” to denote this. He explicated this by claiming, “power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (1977, p. 27).

“The power of critical discourse,” Eagleton (1996) claimed, “moves on several levels” (p. 177). For Eagleton, three levels existed. The first was the “policing” of language; this denotes what discourse is allowed to be “uttered” and by who. An example of this is the term “nigger” or “nigga,” where some groups are given more social freedom to use the term—as a positive, reappropriation of the negative, historic term--while others

are not given such freedom. The second level of critical discourse can be seen as the power-relations between those promoting and maintaining a given discourse and those who are “selectively admitted to it” (Eagleton, p. 177). Finally, the last level addressed by Eagleton (1996) related to who is served by the discourse: the society at large? a particular group with society? or a specific individual? Each of the three ‘levels’ noted by Eagleton was a useful frame with which to analyze images on university homepages by opening such questions as: are there images that are absent on the pages that may be so due to the “policing” of content? what is manifest in the content of each image, which demonstrates potential power-relations? and who is served by the given image selections?

Eagleton’s claim that power works on manifold levels serves as an entry into Foucault’s conception of power. Unlike the Enlightenment notion that privileges the sovereign as the position of authority, Foucault saw power as more diffuse. Foucault (1977) argued that power is not a property or privilege that one might possess but rather functions as a strategy, disposition, or tactic occurring through activity. Thus, it is “a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating transaction...[and] is exercised rather than possessed” (Foucault, 1977, p. 26). This notion was summarized by Paul Strathern (2000), who claimed, for Foucault, power is a technology or technique for regulating individuals rather than a substance wielded by one entity, and power constructs the modern individual through a “plethora of rules and regulations” (p. 69).

Discourse constructs individuals, but this does not simply occur at a production stage that, then, remains unchanged but rather it has the potential to be reproduced, reified, and perpetuated. As Biesecker (2007) stated, discourse relates to the “communication practices in the creation of identities and in the production and

reproduction of social relationships characterized by gender, power, and status” (p. 9; emphasis added). Biesecker could have added race, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical ability to the list as well.

As Brooker (1999) argued, discursive formations are “understood as reinforcing certain already established identities or subjectivities” (p. 67)--for example, gender, race, or physical ability. Discourse, then, is dynamic rather than stable. In some rare cases, one finds that discourse creates the initial frame of a human attribute. For example, the notions of “madness” and “sanity” did not always exist but were “created” through discourse. More commonly, however, is the discursive tension that arises from frames of subjectivity being reinforced as they are also simultaneously subverted. Focusing on discourse about women, Eagleton (1996) claims, “Discourse in all its forms is an obvious concern for feminists, either as places where women’s oppression can be deciphered, or as places where it can be challenged” (p. 187). “Here, ‘discourse’ easily becomes,” Macey (2000) argues, “a near-synonym for ‘ideology’” (p. 100).

The present study focused on images as discursive formations; however, one may wonder what identity construction and human subjectivity is at play regarding this. To understand that, one must realize that the online images develop, enhance, and construct on two different layers. The first layer, which relates to all images, functions as a discursive practice or tactic to erect the institutional identity of the specific school as well as contribute to the overall character of higher education. This occurrence is true regardless of the content of the image. For example, the image on the website could simply be a sculpture or empty football stadium. The second layer, which relates to a subset of all images, works to create, maintain, reproduce, and/or subvert various human

subjectivities. The majority of these images depict an individual or group of individuals. In so doing, it perpetuates how such individuals should be framed. For example, an image of an older, White male as a professor. Thus, the study worked to highlight how higher education, through discourse, constructs its overall identity as well as, and maybe more importantly, how people as subjects are framed—positively or negatively--by the colleges.

Scoring Facial Prominence

Facial prominence is an index of the ratio or degree to which an individual's face takes up a given image (Archer, Iritani, Kimes, & Barrios, 1983). The ratio is constructed by measuring the distance from the individual's chin or lowest visual aspect of their face to the top of his/her head and dividing it by the distance from the lowest visible point of the individual (e.g., his/her feet) to the top of his/her head. As such, it constructs a variable that could be labeled "percent face"--i.e., the percent of the person's face viewable within an image compared to the overall representation of the person. Here, one finds that those closer to the photographer will have a larger score, and those further away will have a smaller score. For example, an image of individual that simply shows his/her face will have a score of 100% because the lowest part of their face and the lowest element of their body are the same point; however, an image with an individual in the distance where the length from his/her chin to the top of his/her head is one centimeter (1 cm) and the distance from his/her feet to the top of his/her head is four centimeters (4 cm) would have a score of 25%.

Why is facial prominence of important symbolic significance? There are two answers to such a question. To begin, one must reflect on the idea that to know a person

is, in pragmatic terms, to know the person's face. One would rarely claim that they know a person by viewing an image of a person's foot--unless, of course, there are clear indicators such as a tattoo or birth mark. Thus, the face of a person has greater, symbolic capital than other elements of his/her body. Second, studies have demonstrated that those who have greater eminence of their face are perceived with greater intelligence, power, authority, credibility, and control (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Zuckerman, 1986). In studies of images within magazines, males consistently had higher facial prominence than their female counterparts, which, additionally, suggests that females were depicted to show their bodily form and possibly sexualized due to this feature. In addition, some studies suggested that those of non-White racial groups are depicted with lower facial eminence than Whites (Zuckerman & Keiffer, 1994).

Intertwining the Methods: How Three Function as One

Discourse analysis provides the core concepts or core categories that establish the boundaries for the coding by grounded theory. Without such guidance, the grounded theory approach would locate groupings that, while locating *sociological* groupings, may lack any critical, cultural significance. In an attempt to highlight how power/authority is represented and what subject positions are shown with power/authority, the grounded theory approach must be enhanced by the critical, discursive approach. After locating issues of power/authority via grounded theory, one simply addresses the said representations as "text" and interprets their possible meanings. Additionally, within discursive analysis, the simple, quantitative approach of facial prominence scoring is appropriated to demonstrate how power can be implicitly performed within a portrait's composition. Thus, this work intertwined the aforementioned methods as to yield the

greatest outcomes for the task at hand. The following section shifts from the abstract level of methodological understanding to make clear what was actually done during the initial stages of the study.

Doing the Research: The Initial Stages

This section makes explicit what research actions transpired. It begins with an explication of the initial stage of the work by highlighting what images were selected and how they were obtained. After making clear how the source was captured, the following subsection addresses how the source was transferred into the qualitative software, NVivo. As a central tool for the research, NVivo is, then, the focus of the following subsection, which explains the coding, categorizing, and “nodding” of the source within the software. These various “groupings” are made explicit in Chapter 3 because its sole focus is the revelation of said groupings as well as relational aspects between key groups.

Capturing the Source: Selecting the Institutions

To analyze the power relations depicted on university homepages, I had to begin by limiting which universities would comprise the source. Although the *Princeton Review* and other magazines rank universities, the most well-known magazine to rank schools is *US News and World Report*. So phenomenal, in fact, are the *US News* rankings, that some of the institutions within the study made sure to have an image of the *US News*’ cover on their homepage showing they made the list. Here, one sees that individual institutions are “buying into” the discursive formation produced by *US News*. Thus, I selected those institutions garnishing the most prestige within their rankings (i.e., National universities) because they have been given the greatest social import.

While the original study attempted to examine the images of *all* “National Universities” as defined by *US News and World Report’s* annual rankings, this was not a possible outcome. In 2008, *US News* had 257 schools ranked as “National Universities.”

Numerous factors affected my ability to obtain information and images for the 257 schools, however. To create a sense of stability in the source and remove the possibility that a school may be ranked for the first time due to recent media attention, I decided to select those institutions that were ranked as “National Universities” for 2005 *and* 2008. This process yielded 236 schools that were in *both* the 2005 and 2008 rankings as “National Universities.” Additionally, I removed both the University of Wyoming and Texas A&M Kingsville due to a lack of any information (such as demographic data) in the 2008 *US News’s* guide.

For the remaining 234 schools, I went to their homepage and captured all images, excluding graphical elements, banners, logos, and the like. This activity produced 3220 files. All of this work occurred during a 1-month period—from September 1, 2008 to September 30, 2008--so the schools, which change their images, are frozen in time to be analyzed. Such an act not only manufactured an artifact to be evaluated synchronically—and, as artifact opens the potential for an archaeological investigation of its discourse as noted by Foucault--but also opened the potential for later study to produce replication of the given artifact as to allow diachronic analysis (i.e., how has the said discourse changed historically). The act of obtaining files over the 1-month period was fairly complex.

Each homepage potentially had numerous “versions” linked to its unique URL, which meant that a system had to be identified for capturing the various forms of the homepage. In the end, I created a system called the “20 refreshes rule.” The rule itself

becomes metaphoric, in principle, of the grounded theory approach. To begin, I went to the homepage of a specific institution and saved the images found on the site. Then, I refreshed the page. Comparing the images on the newly refreshed page to those saved, I determined if they were the same. If they were identical, I counted it as “one refresh time.” If they were different, I saved the new images; then, I would have two versions of the institution’s homepage, which could mean any number of possible images. In this case, however, I did *not* count it as “one refresh time.” Having done this, I repeated the process by refreshing again. Constantly comparing the saved images to those generated through refreshing, I continued until I refreshed 20 times without having a new “version” of the homepage. Although this did not guarantee all possible versions were obtained, it did supply the most feasible means for obtaining the greatest assurance that most—if not all—were located. In one specific case where the numeric filenames suggested two files may be missing, I contacted the institution to inquire and found that the two files had been removed prior to my study; thus, the method has acquired all images in some cases and most in all cases.

Moving the Source to Manage It

Many of the schools allowed me to simply right click and “save image as...”; however, this was not always the case. Some institutions had flashplayers or javascripts that did not make saving the images easy. I screen captured the images and saved them temporarily in Word documents, only later converted them to jpegs via an open source software called GIMP. One school even had security measures that locked their images so as to keep me from right clicking or screen capturing. I employed a computer scientist to get around them, and in the end, I have those images, too. In addition, one should be

clear that the 3220 files noted earlier do not mean 3220 *images*. A few of the files are a “fragmented portrait” where two files must be saved in order to capture one image of a person. Many more of the files are montages that result in numerous images, so there are more than 3220 images to analyze. For example, the first 100 institutions had 1117 files but 1286 images. If this rate were to remain constant throughout the source, there would be approximately 3707 images. The exact number of images is not only difficult to establish but also inconsequential. In all calculations, I used the number 3700 as the base, which is a very close approximation.

After saving all files and converting some via the GIMP software to jpegs, I transferred each file into the qualitative software known as NVivo. To begin, a folder was created within NVivo’s “Internal Sources” folder for *each* of the institutions under investigation. Within each folder, the files for the given school were placed. In order to keep the provenance of each file, a discrete category that can be searched as a unit called a “node” was created for each file type (e.g., jpeg, png, bmp, javascript, etc.). While the file type selected by universities is not essential for this study, I did find that institutions had a preference for jpegs (2208 files) and flashplayers (775 files), which combined accounted for approximately 93% of all file types. At the same time that the node for file type was being inserted into each individual file within NVivo, I also constructed two other initial nodes: Ranking and geographic region. These three “nodes”—file type, ranking, and region—made up the superficial, initial step of investigation but, obviously, do not pertain to the content within the various files.

To examine the content within files, I applied the constant comparative approach of grounded theory. Opening the first file and comparing it to the second file, I sought out

similarities and differences. Without coding, classifying, or making any nodes, I continued this process for approximately 100 files. This step was to get a “feel” for the source and attempt to locate a meaningful, early construct to divide the source. It was clear after doing this that the best way to distinguish content in the various files was by means of the simple categories of person, place, or thing. It was obvious upon comparing files that they differed along these lines. As such, I went completely through the source and assigned each file via nodes to one of the three classes (i.e., person, place, or thing). In order to have consistency, I gave preference to the class “person.” This was necessary since within a montage there may be four frames in which three are “places” and only one is “person.” Given the structure of NVivo, I selected only one of the classes for each file. The aforementioned montage would be placed in the “person” class due to the nature of the research and its focus on power and subject-position.

Quickly perusing the three early classes, I found that the files within the class labeled “thing” were insignificant to the study’s aim. Therefore, I focused my attention on the remaining two classes. Notably, the “person” class was not only the largest group but also had the most significant content for examination; however, the “place” group was not completely insignificant and it also led to an important finding.

Returning to the constant comparative method, I began again to compare and contrast files, but this time, I focused only on those within the “node” labeled “person.” What was different about the “person” (or people) in this image and those in the following image? In short time, numerous social signifiers leaped forth. There were clearly differences in age, gender, and race. Each of these signifiers was then constructed as an “attribute” within the classification structure of NVivo. Realizing that “attributes”

can be charted (i.e., compared graphically, e.g., sex by race), I transferred the initial three classes—ranking, region, and what would be labeled “ppt” (for “person, place, or thing”)—into the classification folder as “attributes.” Such an act allowed me to look at such questions as: How is age distributed across regions? How is gender dispersed across the rankings of institutions? Or other similar questions about how one attribute is disseminated within or through another attribute.

Returning to the files, I began to compare files, again, in hopes of locating other ways in which they differed. After a short time working within the “person” grouping, I realized that the number of individuals within a frame could be useful. Some files had an individual, others had a small group, and still others had a large group. Looking further into this, I realized that within each of these existed another layer in which some people were aware of the camera as if taking a portrait and, in other files, people seemed oblivious to the camera. Thus, I constructed two more attributes in NVivo. The first was labeled “portrait” and consisted of those images where all parties in the frame were visually addressing the camera. The portrait attribute broke into various units noting how many individuals were within the frame (e.g., por 1 was a portrait of a single individual and por 2 was a portrait of two individuals). The second attribute was “camera view” and consisted of three possibilities: the camera as observer, the camera as the point of engagement, or mixed. All portraits were clearly within the camera as a point of engagement attribute. Almost all files could be placed within the first two possibilities for “camera view.” However, in some rare cases, an image showed a person clearly aware of the camera and engaging it yet others in the frame seemed oblivious to it. Thus, in the mixed possibility, we have an image where, if it were cropped, it would clearly be a

portrait, yet it is not cropped and seems to blend the camera as observer and as point of engagement.

With the eight aforementioned attributes—age, race, gender, region, ranking, camera view, portrait, and “ppt”—constructed, I returned again to the files to compare them and locate any other possibility. Since the focus of the work was attempting to address issues of power, I began to ask: Is there a way to “see” power present within this image? Does this image have some content that would demonstrate the individuals within it had more power than others within it or others in the next file’s image? This structure did not manifest itself as quickly because it was more specific. Having viewed innumerable files, I finally began to see some differences. This image had a teacher; this one had a coach; this one had a member of the clergy; and this one had a politician. Given these, I constructed an attribute and named it “authority.” Here, authority (power) was directly witnessed. In some cases, it also allowed one not only to see who has the power but who is subordinate to that individual. For example, a White male professor teaching to White female students showed both the authority position and the subordinate.

This last attribute of “authority” directed me to seek more subtle depictions of power. I began thinking about this by the fact that a few of the politicians shown were at a lectern giving a presentation with a microphone. The use of a microphone is an empowering technology to give an individual “more voice”; thus, I sought out any other images that may have someone using a microphone. In addition, the microphone as a technology that aids in a subtle power distinction made me realize that other technologies may also play that role. As such, I began searching the files to look for technology use. I

began to see a pattern of individuals using the computer. Given literature on the Digital Divide as a means to oppress some groups, it seemed useful to make note of those that use the computer. Moreover, there were some images with people filming or taking a picture with a camera. As Sontag makes clear, there is power in selecting what will be viewed by others--just like the selection of the images in the source by the individual institutions. Therefore, I created a “node” for computer use, microphone use, and camera use.

At this point, I sought to go through the source again. I began comparing images to each other. This time, I thought it may be noteworthy to make “nodes” of more specific characteristics. Thus, I constructed nodes on sports, disability, montage, and ethnic attire. These do not make up much of the source, but in some cases (like disability), lacking representation suggests devaluation. With these nodes fully determined, I returned to the source to compare files in search of a new attribute or node; however, I had no success locating a clear, discrete difference of significance. It appeared that I had saturated the possibilities.

With this grounded theory aspect of the work completed, I turned to facial prominence scoring. For each of the images within the group of “por 1,” which denoted a portrait of a sole individual, I took a ruler and measured, in centimeters, the distance from the bottom of his/her face to the top of his/her head; this became the numerator of the facial prominence scoring to determine the percentage a person’s face took up. Then, I used the ruler to measure, in centimeters, the distance from the lowest part of the person’s body to the top of his/her head; this became the denominator for determining the eminence given to the individual’s face. Dividing the numerator by the denominator, I

determined a ratio or percentage for the degree to which a person's face is depicted. In the final phase of the research, I applied the discursive approach, which analyzed the images and content therein as if they were words or texts. This analysis was done by looking at each attribute and node independently as well as considering relationship between them. In this fashion, the attributes, nodes, and classes are like chapters of a text, individual files are correlated to paragraphs, and the content within images (e.g., people and objects) are similar to words. This is made explicit in Chapter 4, which focuses on the final results. Before addressing the results, Chapter 3 will make explicit the various groupings, classes, and attributes, their amount or common-ness, and their various relations to each other. In short, Chapter 3 denotes the facts of the case.

Summary

As previously asserted, the study used a three-pronged method for addressing power relations within the homepage images of National universities. Beginning with a focus on power, images were gathered and organized using a grounded theory approach. Though this approach has been little used for visual materials, its appropriated form served to make the large number of images more tenable. Additionally, I determined the facial prominence of each portrait that had a sole occupant. The results from this "stage" of the method are found in Chapter 3 and comprise the facts of the case. Having gathered and organized the source into manageable units for analysis via the grounded theory approach, the method shifts in focus to the interpretive method of discourse analysis. Here, the study demonstrates how the visual elements as text depict, manifest, and reify power in relation to various subjectivities. Thus, the facts of the case found in Chapter 3 are interpreted through discourse analysis and make up Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

EMERGENT AREAS FROM THE GROUNDED

THEORY APPROACH

This chapter centers on the outcomes of the grounded theory approach.

Following the assertions of Clarke (2005) and Figueroa (2008) that using grounded theory on visual materials should move from broad to specific groupings, this chapter will explicate the various outcomes of the case and uniting coding. The chapter begins by explicating the actual demographics of the institutions studied as to provide background and texture to the work. Next, it focuses on defining and explaining those groupings that are most general and can be considered the base units of the source. It will, then, move to examine some of the relations between these classes (e.g., age by race) and will focus on more detailed classes. For example, “teaching children,” as opposed to the general category of “authority,” would be a detailed class. The final section of the chapter will consist of five areas: (1) activities at college, (2) authority, (3) the use of technology, (4) symbolic significance, and (5) other types of images not placed in the previous four areas. Because this study is considered a census of a point in time over a designated group, data are presented as descriptive and not inferential.

Overall Information

The overall demographic information for the institutions under investigation was constructed via the averaging of demographic data provided by *US News and World*

Report. Within US News' 2008 Ultimate College Guide, each of the "National Universities" that make up the source provided their demographics. As such, the numbers were compiled and divided by the number of institutions as to give an approximate mean of the demographics for the source.¹ Table 3.1 provides a graphic representation of this information.

Initial Classes: A Starting Point

Files were first grouped according to the institution on whose homepage they appeared. Nine (9) initial classes, then, emerged from the source. These classes include the researcher's judgments as to age, gender, and race; authority; camera view; geographic region of the institution; portrait; institutional rank; and "person, place, or thing." This subsection will make explicit each of these classes.

Person, Place, or Thing

The most generic grouping structure is "person, place, or thing." Thus, the first stage of this process broke the source into three types of images: (1) those with people, (2) those that focus on place, and (3) those that are of things. Table 3.2 depicts this breakdown.

Person, place, or thing is one of the few initial classes--outside of (1) the institution who posted the file, (2) geographic location of institution, and (3) ranking--that functions to organize the total source. Most of the following "initial" classes represent a subsection of the total source, namely "person" and, more specifically, those images where the researcher judged a power relation. Being shown in an image with a power

¹ Historically-Black universities and colleges (HBCs) contributed 4 schools with 64 files to the source; thus, they make up less than 2% of the entire source.

relation, however, does not mean that those groups with the largest representation have the most power because some are depicted in the subordinate role or have a small facial prominence. As such, the following classes and the tables generated from them will not equal the number of total files in the source. In addition, the following “initial” classes reflect the demographic aspects of only those individuals who are central within the image. For example, one finds only eight children shown as the central focus of the file; however, grade school-aged children are depicted in other images as students in a classroom but are not included within the “age” class due to being a secondary feature of the image. Such cases are an outcome of having used NVivo software to store the source because it allows for only one attribute per file; thus, the “central” individuals in each image were coded.

Age

Age, as a researcher judgment, was divided into three, possible groups: Under 18, 18-35, and 36+. Selecting to divide it into three groups was done because the range of ages roughly correspond to precollege aged, college aged (including graduate students), and postcollege aged. As noticed on Table 3.3, children (ages under 18) are quite rare in the images. Due to this occurrence, no further analysis included this age group.

Gender

The next class to address is gender: male and female. Although these terms are more consistently expressed as sex—the biological division based on reproductive anatomy, I have used gender rather than sex to suggest that this class is expressed through performed attributes of the individual rather than essential attributes. The judgment is

made, then, on the cultural representations of gender (see Table 3.4).

Race

Race, for the current project, is divided into six (6) groups: Black, Hispanic, Asian, White, Middle Eastern, and Native American. Again, this is a judgment variable and the divisions were determined via cultural signifiers like eye shape, hair color, skin tone, and other culturally significant phenotypic traits as well as attire (see Table 3.5).

Authority

Authority is defined as a representation depicting an individual who shows a position of authority or explicit power—put simply as a position in which one individual is portrayed as have the ability to significantly reward or punish another individual. This trait can be depicted in such positions as coaches, clergy, teachers, and political figures. Some of these divisions are signified by their cultural location in a defined space or action, their attire, the attire of those around them, or clear, social distinction (e.g., Bill Clinton), while others are signified via context. At its root, authority as a class can be divided into two parts. The first are those shown teaching and includes professors as well as grade school teachers. The second, labeled “nonteaching authority,” are all other representations of authority: clergy, coaches, and politicians (see Table 3.6).

Camera View

The class labeled “camera view” is divided into three parts. The first part includes those images where individuals are engaging the camera. These images are labeled as “point of engagement,” and all portraits fall into this group. The second part is those depictions that have individuals unaware of the camera; in many ways, it is as if the

camera is a person observing others. As such, this part is called “observer.” The final possible “camera view” is the most rare of the possible groupings. It is labeled “mixed” and represents those images where a group of people exist and some are looking at the camera while others are not. For example, an image may have three individuals within it that appear to be a group, yet one individual is looking toward the camera and appears aware of it while the other two are talking to each other. Such an image would be labeled “mixed” (see Table 3.7).

Portrait

The “portrait” grouping is the next, possible class. As a class, it denotes the various images where individuals within the frame are looking at the camera. Here, one finds that it is *nearly* synonymous to the “point of engagement” camera view. Although the “portrait” class could be considered a subclass of the previous “camera view” class, I have selected to call it an initial class because it emerged prior to the “camera view” class, which was inferred from it. The emergence of the “camera view” class, in turn, had consequences on the “portrait” group because the researcher had to make a judgment call about the nature of those images that were “mixed” in the camera view group. Thus, the number of portraits exceeds the “point of engagement” group in the camera view class. The “portrait” group is also an initial class due to its size, scope, and significance; it is the largest class of those images labeled “person.” This class is divided into five groups consisting of “portrait 1,” “portrait 2,” “portrait 3,” “portrait 4,” and “portrait group.” The number denotes the number of individuals within the image. Any portrait that exceeded four individuals was labeled as “portrait group” (see Table 3.8).

Region and Rank

The final two classes, region and institutional ranking, are derived from information provided by *US News*' reporting. *US News*' reporting divides the country into four geographic regions: North, South, Midwest, and West--the North is primarily New England (with the inclusion of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.), the South is essentially the historic Confederacy, the West includes Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and any state west of these, and the Midwest, for the most part, includes the Corn Belt, Great Lakes, and Great Plains (see Table 3.9).

The institutional rankings provided by *US News* fall into one of three groups: Tier 1 schools, Tier 3 schools, and Tier 4 schools. Within the *US News* rankings, there is no Tier 2 due to the fact that Tier 1 schools are ranked numerically, for 2009, from 1st to 130th, but both Tier 3 and Tier 4 schools are listed alphabetically. In short, the "best" school of Tier 3 would rank 134 (due to a three-way tie in Tier 1 for the rank of 130); however, no numbers are assigned to differentiate the tier. Tier 4 is similar to Tier 3 regarding this arrangement. In order to have greater consistency in the number of schools present in a tier, I have selected to divide Tier 1 into two groups: Tier 1a (the top of the tier) and Tier 1b (the bottom of the tier). Table 3.10 shows these outcomes.

Having, now, addressed the initial nine (9) classes, the next layer of data should be expressed. This next layer demonstrates the various relationships between initial classes.

Relational Aspects of Initial Classes: The Second Level of the Source

This subsection will compare the initial or “base” units with each other. Three “base” units will be the primary focus of this subsection: age, gender, and race.

Comparisons of Base Units: Age

The most directly useful relational aspect of age and authority occurs when one examines the specific authority position of teaching (which happens to be the largest group within the authority class). Table 3.11 represents how it is distributed through the authority classes of teaching. Percentages for the column are followed by percentages for the row.

Table 3.11 shows that of all images (i.e., 24) where an individual is teaching children, 20 of them (83%) are between the ages of 18-35. One can also note that the teaching children group and teaching adults group are independent (e.g., both could have had 100% of their images with 18-35-year-old teachers), yet they appear inversely proportional.

Another “base” unit to which one could compare the class of age is “camera view.” Table 3.12 shows that the two camera views were mostly equivalent across age groups.

A more telling, and useful, class to compare with age is gender. Table 3.13 shows a clear difference in the distribution of age regarding gender.

Regardless of gender, one sees that “younger” individuals are more common than “older” individuals. More significant to note, however, is the fact that while males are almost evenly distributed across age groups, females are extremely skewed toward the younger category.

But how does age as a class get distributed across geographic region? In short, are some regions more likely to show younger or older individuals? Table 3.14 compares age across regions to attempt to answer these questions.

With 40% of the North region's depictions of individuals being over 36 years of age, it shows "older" persons at a greater *rate* than its regional "peers;" however, the Midwest, by depicting 38% of the 36+ class, leads all regions in the percent of "older" individuals. Additionally, the Midwest shows "younger" persons at a greater *rate* than the other regions (at 67%) and accounts for the largest representation of the 18-35-year-old class (at 43%).

The relationship between the class of age and the class of those images where a single individual is in a portrait may be another useful comparison. There are 627 depictions of a portrait with a single individual in it. Of the 627, there are 410 (65%) in the age group of 18-35 and 217 (35%) in the age group of 36+.

Given the age groupings, is there a difference that occurs in the allocation of age within differing racial groups? For example, are Blacks shown as young adults (18-35) more than they are shown as "older" adults (36+)? Or, is the percentage of "young" adults compared to "older" adults higher in Whites than in Hispanics? Table 3.15 begins to illuminate answers to these questions.

We see a distinction here between White and all non-White groups. While all non-White groups have greater representation of "young" adults over "older" adults at rates from 2:1 up to 4:1, the White group is nowhere near that. Indeed, Whites are depicted as "younger" more often than "older," but they are at a much lower rate of 3:2. This outcome is due to the fact that 70% of all "older" individuals are White.

Unlike some of the previous comparisons, the final comparison associated with the age class has distinct differences between its categories. This comparison is that of age by institutional ranking. In short, do schools that are ranked differently produce differences in age distribution? Within Table 3.16, we can see such differences.

Any viewer of Table 3.16 becomes aware of the shift of age as related to rank. As the ranking of a school goes from the T1a group to the T1b group, the ratio of the representations of young individuals goes down. After doing so, the ratio of young individuals to older ones, within a given rank, continually climbs and peaks with T4 institutions. The “dip” at T1b schools can be contributed to the fact that such schools represent the largest percentage of the 36+ class.

Comparisons of Base Units: Gender

Having examined some relational comparisons between some “base” units of the source with the “base” unit of age, it seems practical to continue, in the same manner, such comparison yet focus on gender. Thus, the following does just that.

Following the order of the previous section, this section will contrast gender to authority. However, unlike the age section, we will incorporate the other aspects of authority to gender. Table 3.17 demonstrates the relationship between the class of gender and the class of authority.

Here, we see that females dominate the authority position of teaching children, yet it is the *only* authority position in which they have more representation than their male counterparts.

Using a critical eye, one may argue that within the “no authority” class—i.e., images of individuals who could be coded for gender but displayed no position of

authority—males have a higher percentage of representation than females, and this suggest some lack of authority. It is true that *within* the class of “no authority” men make up a great percentage of representations, but the organization of Table 3.17 is a little misleading. If one looks to compare the percentage of men without authority to all men versus the percentage of women without authority to all images of women, we find something insightful. The 556 images of men lacking any authority makes up 80% of the total number of images of men; however, the 540 images of women without explicit authority composes 88% of all images of women. This, then, is roughly a 10% increase in depictions of individuals *lacking* authority for women.

How does the camera frame male and female individuals? Is it more likely to observe women, yet be a point of engagement for men? Comparing gender to camera view, Table 3.18 attempts highlight possible answers.

When it comes to the camera being the point of engagement, males and females are equally represented. This, however, is not the case for the camera as observer. It may initially be counter-intuitive that males would be observed more than females, but Chapter 4 will address this in more detail and demonstrate a rationale for such representation.

Comparing gender to geographic region is another relational aspect worth investigation. Are men represented in one region more than their female counterparts? Does any region have a great disparity in the depiction of one gender over the other? Showing this, Table 3.19 represents a comparison of gender by region.

According to Table 3.19, males are depicted more often than females in every geographic region. This fact is particularly interesting because males account for only

43% of college populations nationally. One finds, by returning to Table 3.1, that males make up only 48% of the population for schools examined in this study.

As we look further at gender as a class, we can compare it to race as a class. When examining the distribution of gender across race, one is seeking answers to such questions as: Do Black males outnumber Black females? Do Hispanic females represent a great percentage of Hispanics than do their male counterparts? And similar questions. Table 3.20 begins to suggest answers to such questions.

If one looks at the pattern of gender by region in Table 3.20, one sees that males are shown slightly more than females; however, here we see that this trend does not exist for all races. In fact, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians have a reversed representation. Blacks are the closest group to have equal representation of gender by race.

To close out this section focused on gender, we should look at how gender is allocated across institutional ranking. Are females shown more often at high ranking schools? Or, are males depicted to a greater degree at such institutions? A pattern surely exists, and one can see it in Table 3.21.

Here, it is clear that the higher the rank of the school the more likely it will have individual males on its homepage. Conversely, the lowest ranking schools (i.e., T4) have a higher percentage of female individuals.

Comparisons of Base Units: Race

The previous two sections have brought to light some comparisons between age and gender and various other “base” units in the source. We now shift to the final “base” unit for comparison: race. Having already pointed out the relations between age and race

(see Table 3.15) and gender and race (see Table 3.20), this section will have only three relational comparisons: race by rank, race by region, and race by camera view.

Do the ratios of racial representations change as the rank of the institution changes? Do Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, etc. get shown more often within schools of institutionally-higher rank? Table 3.22 helps address just this.

Diversity, on average, dips at the T3 ranking then rises sharply for the T4 ranking; if we simply compare the numbers of Blacks and Whites, we see this trend; however, we can also see that some groups hold fairly stable across rankings—e.g., Middle Easterners and Native Americans. Hispanics are the only group to steadily increase as ranking drops. Excluding the small size of the Native American group, Hispanics and their Black peers are the two largest groups percent-wise for T4 schools. Could the increase in representations for T4's be the result of active promotion of diversity to get students of racially diverse backgrounds or could it be that lower ranking schools have more diversity due to lower requirements and easier access?

One can get a better feel for the context of such statements by contrasting the “diversity index” by *US News* with the ranking of those schools listed with a high index (2008)—the diversity index (DI) is a mathematical model that correlates to how closely the demographics of a given school are a reflection of the society as a whole. Attempting this, one finds the following: 49 schools of T1 rank are listed, 25 T3 schools are listed, and 21 T4 schools. There are 133 colleges in T1 and 63 schools in both T3 and T4. Given this fact, 37% of T1 schools make the DI, 40% of T3 schools, and only 33% of T4 institutions. This finding suggests two possible rationales. First, T3 schools are more often diverse, given their rates of being on the DI, but do not reflect this on their

homepages. Second, T3 schools may hold the greatest variations wherein 40% of their institutions are diverse but 60% of them are highly homogenous.

The next relationship that can be explicated is that of race by region. Here, one is identifying the allocation across the four geographic regions—North, South, Midwest, and West—to see if any trend exists. On Table 3.23, one finds a fair amount of consistency with only little difference.

Most of the regions have similar distribution. There are, however, noteworthy differences. First, the South has the largest percent *rate* of Black representation of any region. Second, the West region appears to “flip” or invert the percentages of Blacks and Hispanics compared to the other regions. By observing the rate at which images fall into a given region found on the bottom totals, one sees how some racial groups are depicted above or below the expected “norm.” Examples include: (1) Asian in the North who comprise 34% of all Asian while the North has only 28% of all depictions, (2) Blacks in the South who make up 21% of all Blacks while the South region is only 14% of the regional totals, (3) Hispanics in the West who account for 27% of all Hispanics although the West stands in as only 17% of all regional depictions.

Are certain racial groups “observed” by the camera more than others? Does any group get to be the center of the camera’s attention as a point of engagement more than others? One would get a feel for these by addressing a comparison of race by camera view. Table 3.24 does this.

Here, one sees that White as a group receives more of the camera’s view (regardless of position) than all other groups combined. Blacks and Asians as groups increase in their respective, percent of represent from point of engagement to being

observed, yet Hispanics decrease.

Final Stage of Classes: Specific Classes

The previous sections examined and highlighted the “base” units of the source and, then, demonstrated a variety of relationship between units. The final classes to be explicated are those that relate to specific context, instances, or forms. These specific “instances” can be divided into the follow loose groupings: (1) activities at college, (2) authority, (3) the use of technology, (4) symbolic significance, and (5) other types of images not easily placed in the previous four categories. These five categories make up the remaining totality of the facts of the case. This section will bring out these classes. In the following chapter, these, along with the aforementioned “base” units and relations, will be analyzed discursively as to bring forth any issues of power.

Activities at College

Having addressed some overall aspects of the source, one turns now to draw attention to specific content found among the images. Each of the following sections, with the exception of the one labeled “symbolic significance,” focus on content elements of the source. To begin, we address activities occurring on college campuses. These include (1) studying, (2) pointing, (3) graduating, and (4) collegiate sports.

Studying

Students reading in a library, sitting under a tree on campus with book open and writing notes into a notebook, or in a group around a table in a generic location with books and papers around are all examples of images of what was constructed as studying. Notably, one realizes the absence of any laptop or computer. Surely, students use

computers to study and do homework, like research, but they also use computers for emailing, IMing, and videogames as well as countless other functions unrelated to school. As such, images of studying were confined to those more traditional representations that had books and notes present. In one instance, a laptop is clearly visible but not only do notes, books, and a pen encircle it on the table but some of the paper is actually sitting on the keyboard. There are a total of 162 individuals studying, and Table 3.25 represents the demographic breakdown of those found studying.

Pointing

The second class of images that depict activities at college are those where an individual is pointing. These representations have individuals pointing at an array of objects (e.g., computer screens) and spaces (e.g., the horizon). The 35 individuals pointing within an image is demonstrated on Table 3.26.

Graduation

In addition to images of studying and pointing, one finds another class of representations surrounding graduation. These images depict distinct ceremonial attire. Some individuals are in cap and gown while others are in regalia. It should be noted that, although most images are clearly a graduation ceremony, some of the images may be related to convocation as a ceremony; however, given the distinct attire (especially regalia), all are noted as graduation images. Table 3.27 shows how various groups are represented in the given context as well as what attire (i.e., cap and gown or regalia) is worn.

Collegiate Sports

The final class that may fall under the heading of activities at college are those images of collegiate sports. There are 174 images of sports presented in the source and 292 individuals shown within those images. Interestingly, one can now see that schools depict collegiate sports more often than studying. On the homepages, a wide variety of sports are represented. The sports shown include baseball, basketball, biking, cheerleading, diving, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, hockey, kayaking, lacrosse, racquetball, rowing, skiing, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling. Of these sports, the top three sports, for number of representations, are: football (29 images), soccer (21 images), and cheerleading (20 images).² Perhaps surprisingly, one finds that an evaluation of individuals within the cheerleading images results in having 18 males depicted and 62 females. Additionally, one finds that a review of hockey (ice and field) images yields 3 females and 1 male. It should be noted that the one male hockey player is a goalie, and as such, he is covered as to initially have an indeterminate sex. In fact, he is suggested as female due to the arrangement of female athletes surrounding him in the montage image on the site. Only through researching the athletic department at the school does one find that there is no female ice hockey team.

Given the difficulty with determining the race of athletes caused by equipment (e.g., football helmets), only sex was determined for athletes. Table 3.28 breaks down the degree to which each sex is depicted in images of sports.

² Recently, Katz (July 22, 2010) reported that U.S. District Judge Stefan Underhill ruled that “cheerleading” is not a sport; thus, it does not count as a female sport under Title IX. Oddly, when we address the representations within the images of the source, it is the only one that is co-ed in its depictions. This would give evidence for it being removed as a female sport under Title IX.

The outcomes of Table 3.28 are almost exactly what would be expected due to how Title IX functions. Title IX works on a quota system derived from a given institution's gender demographics. For example, Texas Women's University has only 7% of its student population that are male; thus, they do not need to have any collegiate, male sports. One need only add the "unknown" 2% in Table 3.28 to the "female" group to have "perfect" parity with how gender is distributed nationally on college campuses.

Though Table 3.28 reveals the sex of athletes within college sports, one also can find images of crowds viewing a given sport. There are numerous images of crowds at events, but only six (6) images could be found that both showed the crowd as well as the sport being observed. Of these six images, four are at a football game, one is at a soccer game (though the sex of the soccer players cannot be determined), and one is at a baseball game.

Authority Figures

There are a number of ways in which an individual within an image can display a sense of authority. This section fragments the identity of authority into three classes: (1) famous political figures, (2) teachers/professors, and (3) nonteaching authority figures. Each of the three groups has clear dimensions of authority.

Political Figures

Beginning with famous political figures, one finds that the university homepages have images of three U.S. Presidents, the current Vice President of the United States, two Supreme Court Justices, and a former Vice Presidential candidate. As such, the group includes Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, John F. Kennedy, Joe Biden, Antonin Scalia,

Clarence Thomas, and Sarah Palin. Having previewed the representations of political figures, we turn to look at depictions of teachers.

Teachers

Teaching images can be divided into three groups. The groups consist of (1) those teachers shown teaching children, (2) those professors represented teaching adults, and (3) those individuals who are teaching to an unseen audience that may be assumed adult. Let us continue by examining each of these distinct groups. Of those teachers characterized by having children for students, one finds 26 files. Table 3.29 shows what groups exist within these files.

Looking simply at race as a factor, one finds that Whites make up 73% of those teachers teaching children, while Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics tie for second place with 8% of the representations each.

Those images portraying a professor lecturing to adult learners is the next class to be addressed. These images appear in the context of a classroom as well as in outdoor spaces; however, the classroom context is much more common. There are a total of 127 files depicting the teaching of adults. Table 3.30 addresses the groups that exist within said images.

If one simply looks at race as a category, Whites make up 82% of all images of professors (where students are shown), and the second most common racial category is Black at 11%.

Still focusing on teaching as an authority position, one comes to the instances whereby an individual is signified as a teacher (e.g., pointing at information on a chalkboard) yet lacks any noticeable students (i.e., the teacher is the only individual in

the frame). Here, we can assume that the student audience is adult as well as conceive of the audience as intended to be a first-person perspective such that the viewer of the image stands is *as if* a student in the course. To clarify how groups are depicted in the 45 images where a professor lacks a direct audience, Table 3.31 portrays the groups and their respective representations.

Nonteaching Authority

Under the group of the authority figures, the last identifiable class is called “nonteaching authority.” This class includes coaches, clergy/priests, judges, and umpires; there are a total of 15 images that fall into one of these four classes. Table 3.32 allows us to see how various groups are represented as nonteaching authority figures.

Table 3.32 is to some degree misleading, however. To begin, one finds that of the five Black individuals represented in the table, three are depicted at HBCs. Thus, only two of the Black individuals in nonteaching authority positions are at “mainstream” institutions, and one of them is the Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas. Additionally, a large percentage of the clergy/priests are Black (50%, i.e., 3 of 6), yet these three representations are the aforementioned ones found at HBCs.

Using Technology

This section will address images in which technology is being used by individuals within their depictions. There are three, distinct technologies found within the source and worthy of investigation: computers, cameras, and microphones.

Computers

The computer as technology has garnered much recent attention. Topics like the digital divide and computer literacy are still widely discussed. Given this fact, images that have a computer within them were located. It should be noted that the term “computer” is used loosely here to signify not only personal computers and laptops but clusters, servers, and other digital technologies. Although some images had a computer within their frame, only those images where an individual appeared to be using the computer or was close enough to use the computer were selected. Thus, those images where a computer existed in the background were excluded from this class. Table 3.33 highlights the 146 “computer” images.

Camera

The camera is another technology of interest in images. The camera as a class represents a disparate group of possible technologies: cell phone cameras, video cameras, and “traditional” cameras. Each of the images was selected because it had a specific individual actually using the camera (e.g., taking a picture of another person or videotaping geological formations in Yellowstone). Table 3.34 demonstrates how various groups are shown within the 10 images where an individual is using a camera.

One can notice that no Asian or Hispanic individuals are shown using a camera. Given the stereotypical expressions of Asians as tourists with cameras, one may find it interesting that no Asian is shown taking photos or video.

Microphones

There are 39 images within the source that depict an individual using a microphone. In some of these situations, one finds the individuals standing at a podium, as if giving a lecture or speech, with a microphone present; in others, one sees an individual sitting within a radio station with a microphone in front of him/her. Grouping all such representations together, Table 3.35 shows how various groups are displayed.

Taking a moment to parse out the subcategory of those within a media setting using a microphone (i.e., at a radio station), one finds 8 images. Of these 8 images, 5 or 63% are male and 3 or 37% are female. All of individuals, however, are White.

Symbolic Significance

One could argue that any image within the source has an element of “symbolic significance” by virtue of the fact that it was selected and placed on the homepage of a school; however, for the purpose of this section, “symbolic significance” is focused on two different attributes of images. The first type of symbolically significant image exists in those images, which are alone and, thus, the sole depiction on a given homepage. Here, symbolic significance is established through the mere fact that as an image, each of them does not have to compete with other images on the given Uniform Resource Locator (URL). The second type of symbolic significance of images is the facial prominence given to individuals shown in portraits.

The Only Image: Symbolic Significance via Lack of Others

There are 10 homepages (i.e., URLs) that have only one image on them. Of the 10 images, one finds two representations of “place,” two depictions of “thing,” and six

images of “person.” Looking at the six representations of people, one finds that they include images of (1) a White female with a Black male, (2) an Asian male, (3) a White male, White female, and Hispanic male, (4) two White males and a White female, (5) a White female with a Black female who is a child, and (6) an indeterminate group that is too small to distinguish. Within this group of six, one image stands out further. The image of the single, Asian male has even greater symbolic capital because not only (like the others) is it the only image on the homepage but it also is the only image to have a sole individual. In short, this specific Asian male does not compete with other individuals in his image for the gaze of the viewer.

Portraits: Number of Cases

The second type of depiction that has “symbolic significance” is the portrait of an individual. Here, one can examine two aspects of such representations. First, one can look at the ratio or percentage of representation. In short, are individuals from various groups shown? If so, how often? Second, one can, using the facial prominence technique addressed in the previous chapter, determine how eminent the face of each individual is. Thus, it addresses such questions as: do men or women average a higher facial prominence in the photos?, do Whites or non-Whites hold a higher score on average?, and which subject positions (e.g., Asian female or Black male) have the highest average and the lowest average for the percentage their faces take up within a portrait?

Within the source, any image of an individual could receive a facial prominence score, but it seems to be too large a task, especially with individuals who are quite far away; as such, only those individuals who are shown by themselves in a portrait are given a score. By being singular, they have been afforded greater symbolic value (i.e., they

alone take up an entire “frame” of attention). A portrait was conceptualized as having an individual who was looking at the camera, i.e., they are noticeably aware that they are being photographed. To be the only individual in the frame meant most often that the individual was literally alone; however, in some rare cases, individuals were accepted if the context presented one of two possibilities. First, if the other individuals were intentionally blurred in the background of the image (thus, while others are in the frame, they are noticeably “removed”). Second, if others were in the shot of an individual but were pushed deep into the background (thus, the individual is truly the focus of attention).³ This conceptualization leads to 647 images to measure and determine their facial prominence. Since being a portrait alone garners greater symbolic value, Table 3.36 shows the degree to which different groups are found within portraits.

One can also take a moment to examine how such representations are broken down geographically, considering how region may induce differences within the source due possibly to sociocultural variations. Table 3.37 shows the percentage of all portraits by region to demonstrate that some regions are more likely to show portraits than others. Addressing the various subject positions within the aforementioned portraits, we can compare group distribution by region; for example, 58% of *all* portraits of Asian females are found in the Midwest. Table 3.38 demonstrates this distribution.

One can further look at how race and sex in portraits differs *within* the regions. Table 3.39 highlights the degree to which portraits of various subject positions are depicted within the four regions.

³ These features clarify how the portrait class is not identical to the “point of engagement” camera view since some images were coded as “mixed” but integrated into the portrait class.

Portraits: Facial Prominence

Though Tables 3.25 through 3.39 allow us to see *if* groups are shown and how often, it is also important to examine *how* they are shown by determining the average facial prominence of each group. Thus, Table 3.40 gives us the average facial prominence score for each group.

One should quickly notice when comparing this table to Table 3.36 that, although Native Americans as a group clearly display the highest percentage for the representation of their faces, they *only* have three images—two female and one male—from which to determine facial prominence.

We can also compare the facial prominence scoring between regions. Before explicating this information, it appears warranted to highlight the degree of “White-ness” within the various regions. Table 3.41 organizes census data from 2000 as to demonstrate an approximation of “actual” diversity within the four regions.

Table 3.41 gives us a general feel of the racial makeup of the various regions. Table 3.42 represents the facial prominence scores of the portraits found with each specific region. Note that, in instances where no example is present to score, each table merely labels them “n/a.”

Having addressing the various areas of symbolic significance that occur in the visual set, one need look at the other classes that emerged from the source that are useful yet not easily categorized.

Other Useful Image Classes

Though not contained in the previous classes, two other classes are useful. The first class is comprised of those representations of individuals wearing ethnic attire. The

second class consists of images that—whether directly or indirectly—address persons with disability.

Ethnic Attire

Images of individuals in ethnic attire highlight the “Other-ness” of such individuals. As such, it appears useful to investigate such images. There are a total of 36 files within this class that have 45 individuals robed in ethnic attire. Table 3.43 highlights the representations within such images.

It should be noted that the male subclass can be further divided. Within the 14 images of males in ethnic attire, nine of them (or 64%) are wearing yarmulkes. Such attire is primarily found on institutions directly connected to the Jewish faith (e.g., Yeshiva University).

Disability

For the most part, images directly or indirectly addressing disability have two elements. The first aspect consists of those images that directly depict disability. The second form of image within this class are those images, primarily the representation of stairs, staircases, and ramps, that relate indirectly to disability. One image, within the class, stands out because it is not about access but still indirectly reflects disability.

There are four images that directly address disability; however, only three of these images appear to depict *permanent* disability. One image shows an individual with crutches, which suggests a temporary disability. The three other images include (1) an individual in a wheelchair photographing some flowers, (2) individuals in wheelchairs playing basketball, and (3) a child who appears to have Down Syndrome who is

surrounded by three male researchers. In addition to these specific examples, another image is noteworthy because it simultaneously can be conceived as a direct representation as well as an indirect representation. The image consists of three individuals who appear to be working on a wheelchair, but it is unclear whether the wheelchair belongs to any of them because only one of the three individuals is standing.

In contrast to the direct representations of disability, there exist images about space as it relates to disability. Stairs are shown in 76 images. Of these 76 cases, six specifically highlight the stairs (i.e., the image is only of the stairs and staircase). One of the images of stairs is worth mentioning. Within it, one sees steep stairs leading to four red doors. Over the doors in bold letters, one sees the word “EDUCATION.” Conversely, only three images depict ramps for entry into a building. These three examples vary in their quality, type, and degree of depiction. The first image of a ramp is partially blocked from view due to a tree in the foreground of the image. The second image of a ramp is only noticeable due to the shot being an aerial view of a portion of the campus (i.e., the ramp is not a central figure). The final ramp image is obscured by text on the image; the text ironically reads, “From here, it’s possible.” The last three letters of the text cover a significant portion of the ramp.

Summary

By explicating the numerous outcomes for each of the various classes, this chapter has functioned to make evident the results of the grounded theory approach. Though this feature of the chapter is the most common, the chapter also brings forth the outcomes of the facial prominence scoring. Combined, these two methods make up the facts of the case and provide the “text” by which one can use the third method (i.e.,

critical discourse analysis) employed in the study. Thus, the following chapter applies critical discourse analysis to these facts of the case as to highlight the numerous power relations embedded within these depictions.

Table 3.1—Approximate Demographics of *US News*’ “National Universities”

Demographic Group	Percent of Student Population at Institutions
African American	10%
Native American	1%
Asian	9%
Hispanic	7%
White	71%
International	3%
Males	48%
Females	52%

Table 3.2—Person, Place, or Thing

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Person	2327	72%
Place	397	12%
Thing	496	15%

Table 3.3—Age

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Under 18	8	>1 %
18-35	832	64%
36+	466	36%

Table 3.4—Gender

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Male	695	53%
Female	615	47%

Table 3.5—Race⁴

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Black	205	16%
Hispanic	115	9%
Asian	109	8%
White	835	64%
Middle Eastern	34	3%
Native American	3	>1%

Table 3.6—Authority

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Teaching authority	207	92%
Nonteaching authority	18	8%

⁴ Although one may wish to use the signifiers of “African American” and “Caucasian,” I have selected to use the terms “Black” and “White.” These signifiers focus attention to the visual elements under study and refrain from labeling an individual an American who could be an International student (i.e., a Ghanaian student studying in the US). Additionally, Hispanic is a contested term but is used as to have continuity with the labels provided by the *US News* rankings.

Table 3.7—Camera View

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Point of Engagement	767	35%
Observer	1384	62%
Mixed	70	3%

Table 3.8—Portraits

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Portrait 1	633	80%
Portrait 2	43	5%
Portrait 3	21	3%
Portrait 4	20	3%
Portrait Group	70	9%
Total	787	100%

Table 3.9—Geographic Region of Institution

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
North	1067	33%
South	587	18%
Midwest	903	28%
West	665	21%

Table 3.10—Institutional Rank

Classification	Number of files	Percentage of files
Tier 1a	1026	32%
Tier 1b	740	23%
Tier 3	873	27%
Tier 4	583	18%

Table 3.11—Age by Authority (Teaching)

Age X Authority	Teaching Children	Teaching Adults	Teaching w/o Audience	Total
18-35	21 (81/44%)	23 (18/48%)	4 (8/9%)	48
36+	5 (19/3%)	104 (82/69%)	41 (91/27%)	150
Total	26 (100%)	127 (100%)	45 (100%)	198 (100%)

Table 3.12—Age by Camera View⁵

Age X Camera View	Point of Engagement	Observer	Total
18-35	397 (66/50%)	399 (63/50%)	796
36+	200 (34/46%)	232 (37/54%)	432
Total	597 (100%)	631 (100%)	1228 (100%)

⁵ The overall total of images here does not total what may be expected because the “mixed” class for camera view is not included.

Table 3.13—Age by Gender⁶

Age X Gender	Male	Female	Total
18-35	352 (51/42%)	479 (79/58%)	831
36+	336 (49/72%)	130 (21/28%)	466
Total	688 (100%)	609 (100%)	1297

Table 3.14—Age by Region

Age X Region	North	South	Midwest	West	Total
18-35	219 (60/26%)	117 (65/14%)	360 (67/43%)	136 (63/16%)	832
36+	146 (40/31%)	62 (35/13%)	178 (33/38%)	80 (37/17%)	466
Total	365 (100%)	179 (100%)	538 (100%)	216 (100%)	1298 (100%)

⁶ Though one may believe this number should equal the total for the gender class (i.e., 1310), it does not. There are two factors influencing this outcome. First, the eight images of children are not considered. This fact leaves a discrepancy of five gendered individuals who have no age. Age for these images cannot be determined due to either the angle of the image and/or distance at which the individual is within the frame.

Table 3.15—Age by Race⁷

Age X Race	Black	Hispanic	Native Am.	MidEast	White	Asian	Total
18-35	157 (77/19%)	84 (74/10%)	2 (67/>1%)	23 (68/3%)	471 (57/57%)	86 (80/10%)	823
36+	47 (23/10%)	30 (26/6%)	1 (33/>1%)	11 (32/2%)	354 (43/70%)	22 (20/5%)	465
Total	204 (100%)	114 (100%)	3 (100%)	34 (100%)	825 (100%)	108 (100%)	1288 (100%)

Table 3.16—Age by Ranking

Age X Rank	T1a	T1b	T3	T4	Total
18-35	214 (64/26%)	186 (53/22%)	207 (63/25%)	223 (78/27%)	830 ⁸
36+	119 (36/26%)	165 (47/35%)	120 (37/26%)	62 (22/13%)	466
Total	333 (100%)	351 (100%)	327 (100%)	285 (100%)	1296 (100%)

⁷ The overall total may not be what is expected; however, 10 images could not be coded for race based on the angle of the camera shot. For the most part, the camera shot was directly behind the person allowing for age and gender to be determined but only providing skin tone as a racial signifier. Given this fact, the skin tone made making a distinction between Hispanic, Asian, and White impossible.

⁸ Two of the images that are not coded for age fall in the T1 categories. For this reason, the total does not add up to the expected 832.

Table 3.17—Gender by Authority

Gender X Authority	Teaching Children	Teaching Adults	Teaching w/o Audience	NonTeaching	Political Figure	No Authority
Male	6 (23%)	84 (66%)	36 (78%)	6 (86%)	7 (88%)	556 (51%)
Female	20 (77%)	43 (34%)	10 (22%)	1 (14%)	1 (12%)	540 (49%)
Total	26 (100%)	127 (100%)	46 (100%)	7 (100%)	8 (100%)	1096 (100%)

Table 3.18—Gender by Camera View⁹

Gender X Camera View	Point of Engagement	Observer	Total
Male	303 (50/46%)	350 (55/54%)	653
Female	299 (50/51%)	288 (45/49%)	587
Total	602 (100%)	638 (100%)	1240

⁹ The overall total is less than would be expected due to the fact that the “mixed” camera view is not present.

Table 3.19—Gender by Region

Gender X Region	North	South	Midwest	West	Total
Male	192 (52/28%)	98 (54/14%)	288 (53/41%)	117 (53/17%)	695
Female	175 (48/28%)	83 (46/13%)	255 (47/41%)	102 (47/17%)	615
Total	367 (100%)	181 (100%)	543 (100%)	219 (100%)	1310

Table 3.20—Gender by Race¹⁰

Gender X Race	Black	Hispanic	Native Am.	MidEast	White	Asian	Total
Male	103 (50/15%)	54 (47/8%)	1 (33/>1%)	18 (53/3%)	466 (56/68%)	46 (42/7%)	688
Female	102 (50/17%)	61 (53/10%)	2 (67/>1%)	16 (47/3%)	366 (44/60%)	63 (58/10%)	610
Total	205 (100%)	115 (100%)	3 (100%)	34 (100%)	832 (100%)	109 (100%)	1298 (100%)

¹⁰ Again, discrepancies are due to an inability to code for either race or gender in certain files.

Table 3.21—Gender by Ranking

Gender X Rank	T1a	T1b	T3	T4	Total
Male	175 (53/25%)	214 (60/31%)	167 (50/24%)	139 (48/20%)	695
Female	157 (47/26%)	144 (40/23%)	164 (50/27%)	150 (52/24%)	615
Total	332 (100%)	358 (100%)	331 (100%)	289 (100%)	1310

Table 3.22—Race by Rank

Race X Rank	T1a	T1b	T3	T4	Total
Black	54 (16/26%)	49 (14/24%)	39 (12/19%)	63 (22/31%)	205
Hispanic	25 (7/22%)	24 (7/21%)	30 (9/26%)	36 (13/31%)	115
Native Am.	0 (0/0%)	1(0/33%)	1 (0/33%)	1 (0/33%)	3
MidEast	10 (3/29%)	8 (2/24%)	10 (3/29%)	6 (2/18%)	34
White	211 (63/25%)	237 (67/28%)	224 (69/27%)	160 (56/19%)	832
Asian	34 (10/31%)	34 (10/31%)	22 (7/20%)	19 (7/17%)	109
Total	334 (100%)	353 (100%)	326 (100%)	285 (100%)	1298 (100%)

Table 3.23—Race by Region¹¹

Race X Region	North	South	Midwest	West	Total
Black	59 (16/29%)	43 (24/21%)	83 (15/40%)	20 (9/9%)	205
Hispanic	25 (7/22%)	12 (7/10%)	47 (9/41%)	31 (14/27%)	115
Native Am.	0 (0/0%)	0 (0/0%)	2 (0/67%)	1 (1/33%)	3
MidEast	6 (2/18%)	5 (3/15%)	18 (3/53%)	5 (2/15%)	34
White	236 (65/28%)	107 (60/13%)	355 (65/43%)	137 (63/16%)	835
Asian	37 (10/34%)	11 (6/10%)	39 (7/36%)	22 (10/20%)	109
Total	363 (100/28%)	178 (100/14%)	544 (100/42%)	216 (100/17%)	1301 (100%)

¹¹ The totals for each race correspond identically to those found in Table 3.5; however, the researcher could not determine why a difference exists between the totals for White in Table 3.22 and Table 3.23. Being only three images, it should have little overall impact on the outcomes.

Table 3.24—Race by Camera View

Race X Camera View	Point of Engagement	Observer
Black	90 (15%)	106 (17%)
Hispanic	63 (11%)	47 (8%)
Native Am.	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
MidEast	18 (3%)	14 (2%)
White	388 (65%)	390 (62%)
Asian	37 (6%)	69 (11%)
Total	599 (100%)	626 (100%)

Table 3.25—Images of Studying

Group	Number of Representations	Percent of Studying Images
Asian Female	11	6.8%
Asian Male	5	3.1%
Black Female	16	10%
Black Male	11	6.8%
Hispanic Female	11	6.8%
Hispanic Male	7	4.3%
Middle Eastern Female	2	1.2%
Middle Eastern Male	1	0.6%
White Female	62	38%
White Male	36	22%
All Asians	16	10%
All Blacks	27	17%
All Hispanics	18	11%
All Middle Eastern	3	2%
All White	98	61%
Females	102	63%
Males	60	37%

Table 3.26—Individuals Pointing

Group	Number of Representations	Percent of Pointing Images
Asian Female	2	6%
Asian Male	0	0%
Black Female	4	11%
Black Male	6	17%
Hispanic Female	5	14%
Hispanic Male	1	3%
Middle Eastern Female	0	0%
Middle Eastern Male	0	0%
White Female	7	20%
White Male	10	29%
All Asians	2	6 %
All Blacks	10	29%
All Hispanics	6	17%
All Middle Eastern	0	0%
All White	17	49%
Females	18	51%
Males	17	49%

Table 3.27—Images of Graduation

Subject Position

Group	# in cap	%in cap	#regalia*	% in regalia	#PhD	% PhD	Minus HBC ¹² PhD**	%PhD, excluding HBCs
Asian Female	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian Male	4	4	1	2.5	1	4	1	4
Black Female	21	23	4	10	0	0	0	0
Black Male	1	1	6	15	5	19	2	9
Hispanic Female	8	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic Male	3	3	2	5	0	0	0	0
MidEast Female	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
MidEast Male	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
White Female	30	32	5	12.5	2	8	2	9
White Male	17	18	22	55	18	69	18	78

*this signifies those at both the Masters and PhD level

**notably, one of the two images of a Black male PhD is at South Carolina State University, which has a 97% Black student population, but it is not an HBC.

¹² HBC denotes Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Table 3.27 (continued)

Race

Group	# in cap	%in cap	#regalia	% in regalia	#PhD	% PhD	Minus HBC PhD	%PhD, excluding HBCs
All Asian	7	8	1	2.5	1	4	1	4
All Black	22	24	10	25	5	19	2	9
All Hispanic	11	12	2	5	0	0	0	0
All MidEast	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
All White	47	51	27	67.5	20	77	20	87

Gender

Group	# in cap	%in cap	#regalia	% in regalia	#PhD	% PhD	Minus HBC PhD	%PhD, excluding HBCs
All Female	65	70	9	22.5	2	8	2	9
All Male	28	30	31	77.5	24	92	21	91

Table 3.28—Sex of Depicted Athletes

Sex	Number of Representation	Percent of All Representations
Female	162	55%
Male	126	43%
Unknown*	4	2%

*This group represents those images where sex could not be determined (e.g., someone completely covered in fencing gear).

Table 3.29—Teachers of Children

Sex of Teacher

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations
Females	20	77%
Males	6	23%

Diversity of Female Teachers

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations*
Asian Females	2	7.7%
Black Females	2	7.7%
Hispanic Females	1	3.3%
MidEast Female	1	3.5%
White Female	14	54%

*This is the percent of all *female* representations only.

Table 3.29 (continued)

Diversity of Male Teachers

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations*
Asian Males	0	0%
Black Males	0	0%
Hispanic Males	1	17%
MidEast Male	0	0%
White Male	5	83%

*This is the percent of all *male* representations only.

Table 3.30—Teachers of Adults

Sex of Professors

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations
Females	44	35%
Males	83	65%

Table 3.30 (continued)

Diversity of Female Professors

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations*
Asian Females	4	9%
Black Females	4	9%
Hispanic Females	0	0%
MidEast Female	0	0%
White Female	36	82%

*This is the percent of all *female* representations only.

Diversity of Male Professors

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations*
Asian Males	2	2.4%
Black Males	10	12%
Hispanic Males	2	2.4%
MidEast Male	1	1.2%
White Male	68	82%

*This is the percent of all *male* representations only.

Table 3.31—Professors Without Audience

Sex of Professors

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations
Females	11	24%
Males	34	76%

Diversity of Female Professors

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations*
Asian Females	0	0%
Black Females	5	45%
Hispanic Females	0	0%
MidEast Female	0	0%
White Female	6	55%

*This is the percent of all *female* representations only.

Diversity of Male Professors

Group	Number of Representation	Percent of Representations*
Asian Males	3	9%
Black Males	4	12%
Hispanic Males	5	15%
MidEast Male	4	12%
White Male	18	53%

*This is the percent of all *male* representations only.

Table 3.32—Nonteaching Authority Figures*

Group	Number of Representations	Percent of Nonteaching Authority Images
Asian Female	0	0%
Asian Male	0	0%
Black Female	2	13%
Black Male	3	20%
Hispanic Female	0	0%
Hispanic Male	1	6.6%
Middle Eastern Female	0	0%
Middle Eastern Male	0	0%
White Female	0	0%
White Male	8	53%
All Asians	0	0%
All Blacks	5	33%
All Hispanics	1	7%
All Middle Eastern	0	0%
All White	8	53%
Females	2	13%
Males	13	87%

*Note the one image of an umpire at a baseball game is included; however, while he is clearly male, his race is indeterminate. As such, some of the numbers in the table will not add up to 100%.

Table 3.33—Technology: Using Computers

Group	# of Representations	Percent of Computer Images
Asian Female	12	8.2%
Asian Male	6	4.1%
Black Female	11	7.5%
Black Male	10	6.8%
Hispanic Female	4	2.7%
Hispanic Male	6	4.1%
Indeterminate Female	5	3.4%
Indeterminate Male	6	4.1%
Middle Eastern Female	3	2%
Middle Eastern Male	4	2.7%
White Female	39	27%
White Male	39	27%
All Asians*	18	12%
All Blacks	21	14%
All Hispanics	10	6.8%
All Middle Eastern	7	4.8%
All White	78	53%
Females	74	51%
Males	72	49%

*The groups that focus only on race do not add up to 100% due to the 11 images that are indeterminate.

Table 3.34—Technology: Using Cameras

Group	Number of Representations	Percent of Camera Images
Asian Female	0	0%
Asian Male	0	0%
Black Female	1	10%
Black Male	1	10%
Hispanic Female	0	0%
Hispanic Male	0	0%
Middle Eastern Female	1	10%
Middle Eastern Male	1	10%
White Female	3	30%
White Male	3	30%
All Asians	0	0%
All Blacks	2	20%
All Hispanics	0	0%
All Middle Eastern	2	20%
All White	6	60%
Females	5	50%
Males	5	50%

Table 3.35—Using Microphones

Group	# of Representations	Percent of Microphone Images
Asian Female	0	0%
Asian Male	0	0%
Black Female	1	2.6%
Black Male	8	21%
Hispanic Female	1	2.6%
Hispanic Male	0	0%
Indeterminate Female	0	0%
Indeterminate Male	2	5.1%
Middle Eastern Female	0	0%
Middle Eastern Male	0	0%
White Female	8	21%
White Male	19	49%
All Asians*	0	0%
All Blacks	9	23%
All Hispanics	1	2.6%
All Middle Eastern	0	0%
All White	27	73%
Females	10	26%
Males	29	74%

*The groups that focus only on race do not add up to 100% due to the two images that are indeterminate.

Table 3.36—Portraits of Single Individuals

Group	# of Representations	Percent of Portrait Images
Native American Female	2	0.4%
Native American Male	1	0.2%
Asian Female	25	3.9%
Asian Male	14	2.2%
Black Female	47	7.3%
Black Male	43	6.7%
Hispanic Female	36	5.6%
Hispanic Male	33	5.1%
Middle Eastern Female	11	1.7%
Middle Eastern Male	8	1.2%
White Female	198	31%
White Male	229	35%
All Native American	3	0.6%
All Asians	39	6%
All Blacks	90	14%
All Hispanics	69	11%
All Middle Eastern	19	2.9%
All White	427	66%
Females	319	49%
Males	328	51%

Table 3.37—Regional Rates of Portraits

Region	# of portraits	% of all portraits
North	86	13%
South	78	12%
Midwest	375	58%
West	108	17%
Total	647	100%

Table 3.38—The Distribution of Groups by Region

Group	North	South	Midwest*	West
Asian Female (AF)	25%	0%	58%	21%
Asian Male (AM)	21%	7%	71%	0%
Native American Female (NAF)	0%	0%	50%	50%
Native American Male (NAM)	0%	0%	100%	0%
Black Female (BF)	19%	6%	66%	9%
Black Male (BM)	9%	19%	53%	19%
Hispanic Female (HF)	8%	22%	44%	25%
Hispanic Male (HM)	15%	9%	48%	27%
MidEast Female (MeF)	9%	27%	45%	18%
MidEast Male (MeM)	0%	13%	75%	13%
White Female (WF)	12%	12%	60%	16%
White Male (WM)	14%	12%	59%	16%

*Notably, the Midwest is the only region that has representation of every group, and the South has the most groupings missing with three (i.e., Asian female, Native American female, and Native American male)

Table 3.39—Regional Breakdown of Portraits

North

Group	# of images	% of given region
AF	6	7%
AM	3	3%
NAF	0	0%
NAM	0	0%
BF	9	10%
BM	4	5%
HF	3	3%
HM	5	6%
MeF	1	1%
MeM	0	0%
WF	24	28%
WM	31	36%
All Females	43	50%
All Males	43	50%
All Whites	55	64%
All Non-Whites	31	36%

Table 3.39 (continued)

South

Group	# of images	% of given region
AF	0	0%
AM	1	1%
NAF	0	0%
NAM	0	0%
BF	3	4%
BM	8	10%
HF	8	10%
HM	3	4%
MeF	3	4%
MeM	1	1%
WF	24	31%
WM	27	35%
All Females	38	49%
All Males	40	51%
All Whites	51	65%
All Non-Whites	27	35%

Table 3.39 (continued)

Midwest

Group	# of images	% of given region
AF	14	4%
AM	10	3%
NAF	1	0%
NAM	1	0%
BF	31	8%
BM	23	6%
HF	16	4%
HM	16	4%
MeF	5	1%
MeM	6	2%
WF	118	31%
WM	134	36%
All Females	185	49%
All Males	190	51%
All Whites	252	67%
All Non-Whites	123	33%

Table 3.39 (continued)

West

Group	# of images	% of given region
AF	5	5%
AM	0	0%
NAF	1	1%
NAM	0	0%
BF	4	4%
BM	8	7%
HF	9	8%
HM	9	8%
MeF	2	2%
MeM	1	1%
WF	32	30%
WM	37	34%
All Females	53	49%
All Males	55	51%
All Whites	69	64%
All Non-Whites	39	36%

Table 3.40—Average Facial Prominence Within Portraits

Group	Average Facial Prominence Score
Native American Female	73.5%
Native American Male	53%
Asian Female	63.6%
Asian Male	58.3%
Black Female	70%
Black Male	58%
Hispanic Female	60.4%
Hispanic Male	64.3%
Middle Eastern Female	51.5%
Middle Eastern Male	54.5%
White Female	59.7%
White Male	59.6%
All Native American	66.7%
All Asians	61.7%
All Blacks	64.2%
All Hispanics	62.2%
All Middle Eastern	52.8%
All White	59.6%
Females	61.4%
Males	59.7%

Table 3.41—Regional Differences in the Degree of “White-ness”

Region	# selecting “White” on Census	Total population	% White
North	43,342,458	60,246,523	71.94%
South	48,431,561	69,282,201	69.90%
Midwest	52,400,425	64,792,776	80.87%
West	50,339,696	87,600,406	57.47%
Total	194,514,140	281,921,906	68.99%

Table 3.42—Regional Facial Prominence

North

Group	Average Facial Prominence Score
Native American Female	n/a
Native American Male	n/a
Asian Female	57%
Asian Male	45%
Black Female	63%
Black Male	46%
Hispanic Female	62%
Hispanic Male	70%
Middle Eastern Female	42%
Middle Eastern Male	n/a
White Female	57%
White Male	67%

Table 3.42 (continued)

South

Group	Average Facial Prominence Score
Native American Female	n/a
Native American Male	n/a
Asian Female	n/a
Asian Male	65%
Black Female	49%
Black Male	59%
Hispanic Female	65%
Hispanic Male	60%
Middle Eastern Female	57%
Middle Eastern Male	51%
White Female	60%
White Male	60%

Table 3.42 (continued)

Midwest

Group	Average Facial Prominence Score
Native American Female	95%
Native American Male	53%
Asian Female	68%
Asian Male	62%
Black Female	78%
Black Male	70%
Hispanic Female	59%
Hispanic Male	64%
Middle Eastern Female	53%
Middle Eastern Male	55%
White Female	62%
White Male	59%

Table 3.42 (continued)

West

Group	Average Facial Prominence Score
Native American Female	52%
Native American Male	n/a
Asian Female	59%
Asian Male	n/a
Black Female	44%
Black Male	55%
Hispanic Female	58%
Hispanic Male	63%
Middle Eastern Female	46%
Middle Eastern Male	58%
White Female	54%
White Male	53%

Table 3.43—Ethnic Attire

Subject Position

Group	# of Representations	% of Portrait Images
Native American Female	3	7%
Native American Male	0	0%
Asian Female	5	11%
Asian Male	0	0%
Black Female	7	16%
Black Male	2	4%
Hispanic Female	0	0%
Hispanic Male	0	0%
Middle Eastern Female	12	27%
Middle Eastern Male	4	9%
White Female	2	4%
White Male	8	18%
Indeterminate Race/Sex	2	4%

Table 3.43 (continued)

Race

Group	# of Representations	% of Portrait Images
All Native American	3	7%
All Asians	5	11%
All Blacks	9	20%
All Hispanics	0	0%
All Middle Eastern	16	36%
All White	10	22%
Indeterminate Race	2	4%

Gender

Group	# of Representations	% of Portrait Images
Females	30	67%
Males	14	31%
Indeterminate Gender	1	2%

CHAPTER 4

DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF GROUNDED THEORY GROUPINGS

In the previous chapter, the case and unit coding of the source were explicated. This chapter seeks to interpret those various groups by applying the discursive approach addressed in Chapter 2. As addressed in Chapter 1, we can aid this analysis by interpreting the outcomes as a visual narrative. Three visual narratives are found. The first represents an overarching narrative about what institutions value via the selection and ratio of various “general” groups. In addition, two competing visual narratives also emerge. The story of White male power is the first such visual narrative. The second visual narrative challenges the narrative of White male power.

Overall Institutional Identity Constructed: Its General Visual Narrative

The overarching values of institutions can be seen in this first narrative. By selecting to depict some groups more often, the visual narrative potentially demonstrates how institutions wish to be identified. Although this narrative does not directly relate to power, it does provide two important elements. First, the visual narrative provides background and texture to the other two competing visual narratives. Second, and more importantly, it allows for a baseline by which the other two narratives can be contrasted.

Person, Place, or Thing

Table 3.2 shows a breakdown of the source into the three primary classes of person, place, or thing. “Person” as a class consumes 72% of all images, which highlights

the social dimension of education at learning institutions. Though schools are often conceived of as “places” that are attended, one finds that of these primary classes it is last in the number of depictions.

Since “Person” is the biggest grouping, it opens the largest range of visual narratives. The two competing visual narratives emerge from the “Person” group. Given the breadth of the “Person” group, the following subsection addresses the size of various subgroups within it. Then, the final subsection, of the general visual narrative, focuses on specific depictions of “Place” as relevant to persons with disabilities.

Breaking Down the “Person” Class

By addressing the rates of subgroups within the “Person” class, one can see the general narrative of what institutions deem significant. Explicating the number of files within each subgroup, Table 4.1 shows their distribution.

Examining Table 4.1, one sees a general visual narrative of institutions that depict single individuals in portraits at a rate almost *three times* as much as the next largest subgroup. Here, the rate of images suggests the American individualism narrative. The two next largest subgroups depict teaching authority and computer use, which one may expect as valuable representations for colleges. One of the surprising aspects of Table 4.1 is the rate of sport depictions. Files associated with sports outnumber both “studying” and “graduation” images. Images of those with disabilities make up the smallest subgroup and are the focus of the following subsection.

Images of individuals with disability: Examination and interpretation. Visual depictions of persons with disabilities are often rare in traditional media outlets. This section addresses the five depictions noted in Table 4.1. It begins by focusing on direct

representation where an individual with a disability is shown in an image. Then, the section turns to two indirect images of disability. In the final section, it investigates an aspect of university images that is relevant to those with disability yet does not directly depict them.

Of the 2327 images of people in the source, only two images directly show a person with a *physical* disability. Both images are individuals in a wheelchair. The first image shows a single White male in a wheelchair. He is outdoors, on a sidewalk, taking a picture of a flower bed. The second image shows 10 individuals in wheelchairs playing indoor basketball: two are White women, two are Hispanic males, and six are White males. With such few depictions, they make up *significantly less than 1%* of the total images of people in the source.¹³

Let us begin by examining the image with 10 individuals. On the positive side, it shows those with disability actively participating in sports as one White female is shooting the basketball. It hints at the potential for some normalcy in the life of those who are restricted by physical ability. Since there is a group, it also suggests community among its members. This reading, however, is the end of the positive connotations. The image of the basketball players is not, however, the only “image” in the file. The file is a two-tiered image. It is not a montage with separate frames but rather a representation with a distinct image in the foreground and another in the background. Unfortunately, those with disabilities are relegated to the background image. They are placed in the background as evidence for the image in the foreground. The foreground representation is of a Hispanic male holding a sign. The sign is an appropriation of the traditional

¹³ This outcome is not too surprising. Kaye, Kange, and LaPlante (2002) point out that 1.6 million Americans use wheelchairs, which would suggest about 0.5% of the US population.

“handicapped” image of a stick figure in a wheelchair; however, it has been altered slightly to give the sense that the person is moving rapidly. His name and title appear in text next to him professing him as a “specialist” regarding persons with disabilities. In some ways, then, the 10 individuals suffer from “tokenism” because they are not shown in their own right but rather relegated to functionally serving another interest.

There is another image of disability. Unlike the previous direct representations of physical disability, this image shows a child with Down’s Syndrome.¹⁴ The White child whose gender is indeterminate is sitting with three adults, who appear to be researchers, kneeling in semicircle behind the child and smiling for the camera.

In addition to the previous images, there are two images in which disability is referenced though to a lesser degree. The first shows a temporary disability, and the second shows individuals working on a wheelchair. In the first image, a Black male is sitting on an examination table while an older White female is examining his right leg and a young, White female is straightening his left leg. This reading alone would not suggest any temporary disability since he could be simply getting a physical; however, in the background one sees crutches. Here, however, we see White females as both caregiver and expert as they appear to have some medical knowledge.

In the second image, we see three individuals working on a wheelchair. A wheelchair sits in the foreground to the right. To the left of the wheelchair and slightly behind it, a White female is holding a piece of the wheelchair up in her hand and looking down at a document that is held by a White male to her right. The White male is also looking at the document as if it is directions. Standing between and behind these two is

¹⁴ Notably, Down’s Syndrome is both a physical and cognitive disorder. Being such, however, makes it distinct from the previous images that were solely physical in nature.

an older White male who appears to be a teacher. The presence of the wheelchair makes the image initially appear only tangentially related to disability, but one finds that some uncertainty exists within the image. Both the individuals who are looking at the document are sitting, but the teacher is standing. As such, we can infer that the wheelchair does not belong to the teacher. Both individuals who are working on the wheelchair, however, are sitting, and the image is cropped so we cannot see their legs. Thus, one could have an amputated leg and the wheelchair could be his/hers. In contrast, the wheelchair could be someone not in the present frame; thus, the image falls into some indeterminacy.

The final type of image relevant to issues of disability is representations of stairs. I originally placed all structures and buildings in a group believing they were of no consequence; they did not have images of subjects, interaction, and subject-positions, which seemed necessary for power relations to exist. Then, I read an essay by Jim Ferris (2009) who brought the significance of the historical building's aesthetics into a new perspective. Ferris (2009) makes the following illustration: "picture a woman in a wheelchair at the foot of the stairs leading to the library. Is it her inability to walk that keeps her out of the library? Or is it the decision to make climbing stairs a necessary part of entering a library? This image can help us to understand the distinction...between *impairment* and *disability*" (p.9). Following this claim, we find images in the data often represent the most historic buildings with huge columns and steep staircases. Though such buildings must adhere to specific regulations due to Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Jermaine Martinez (2009), a PhD student, points out what those with disabilities must go through to enter one historical building at a premiere institution:

In between two of the University of Illinois' oldest buildings, Gregory Hall and Lincoln Hall...there is a service vehicle access driveway. There are a few parking

spots, a turnabout, and two waste management dumpsters. On particularly humid and warm days, the stench emanating from these dumpsters is so potent that if the wind is blowing just right, one can catch a whiff of their putrid sweetness from across the quad, a distance of about two blocks. This service access driveway is also the building access for people in wheelchairs. The ADA entrances for Gregory Hall are accessed through this stench filled locale. And, the ADA entrances for Lincoln Hall also serve as the "loading dock" for the building. Given the sheer age of these buildings,...the university seemed to have improvised ADA access, utilizing what are essentially service loading docks, driveways, and dumpster locations as access points for those with disabilities. (n.p.)

Such an access suggests that people with disabilities are treated as essentially supplementary to the educational environment that occurs inside the building.

Within the source, stairs are shown in 76 images. Of these 76 cases, six specifically highlight the stairs by making them the only object within the frame. Conversely, only three images depict ramps for entry into a building. The first image of a ramp is partially blocked from view due to a tree in the foreground of the image. The second image of a ramp is only noticeable due to the shot being an aerial view of a portion of the campus, which makes the ramp only a peripheral space. The final ramp image is obscured by text on the image. The text ironically reads, "From here, it's possible." The last three letters of the text cover a significant portion of the ramp.

General Visual Narrative: A Summary

Overall, the general visual narrative places greater value on those in portraits, those teaching, and those explicitly using a computer over images of disability, ethnic attire, and pointing. While not entirely absent, the three smallest subgroups are placed on the margin. Those with disabilities and those in ethnic attire often represent individuals from historically-marginalized groups. As such, a "center" within the overall narrative appears to form. This "center" may be White male power as often is the case, and the

following section will investigate this potential visual narrative.

Seeking the “Center”: White Male Power

Looking at the content of the previous chapter, a visual narrative emerges that “centers” White males. This section will examine how White males are depicted, which allows this potential narrative. The contexts which suggest the narrative of White male power include: (1) pointing, (2) technology use, (3) images of teaching and graduation, (4) nonteaching authority, (5) portraits, and (6) ethnic attire. The first two groups suggest power via knowledge. With the exception of the ethnic attire group, the latter groups show power explicitly.

Pointing: White Males

Many website viewers may see no significance to an image of an individual pointing. Foucault argues that knowledge and power are two sides of the same coin and, even, uses the term “power/knowledge.” Images of pointing suggest power/knowledge in two ways. First, they do so through centering the attention on the individual doing the pointing. There is no image where someone in the background is pointing. Second, they imply that the individual depicted has knowledge that others in the frame as well as the viewer of the image do not have. In short, all “pointers” are *directing* the attention of others as well as the viewer.

Examining Table 3.26, we find which subject positions are shown pointing. Since previously we have shown how absence itself can have significance, it may be useful to begin our evaluation of the content of Table 3.26 by viewing which groups are absent. No Native Americans (male or female), Middle Easterners (male or female), or Asian males

are depicted pointing. Of the other racial groups, Whites make up almost 50% of all persons pointing in an image. Blacks make up the second largest group. Combined Whites and Blacks account for over three fourths of all pointing individuals. In both racial groups, males outnumber females; however, females slightly outnumber males in the *overall* pointing group.

The visual narrative suggests that if someone needs to know how to get somewhere, he/she should ask a White or Black individual. It may be an overextension but such discourse could be a reflection of the national ideology around race that perceives White and Black as “more American.” Given this narrative, the schools appear to reinforce a Black/White binary when it comes to racial diversity.

Of those shown pointing who are neither White nor Black, we find an odd pattern. In contrast to White and Black groups that have a greater number of males pointing, the other racial groups are the opposite. Asian females are shown twice, yet Asian males are not shown; similarly, the ratio of Hispanic females shown pointing to their male counterparts is 5 to 1. Nothing clearly explains this occurrence.

Using Technology: White Males

Never before has personal technology signified socio-economic status as it does in our present era. Images of individuals using three different technologies hold significant meaning to this study. The first is the microphone. As a technology, the microphone literally enhances one’s voice. Those with a microphone have greater power to be heard. The second is the camera. As Sontag argued, the photographer always holds power to shape future perceptions because he/she selects the frame through which later viewers will experience the event or object. He/she has the power to select some elements

for the photo and not others. The final technology is the computer. Much research has examined the “digital divide” or racial differences in the degree and access of computer use, especially the ability to get online. Images depicting an individual at a computer suggest numerous things: knowledge to use a computer, access to online information suggesting increased knowledge via consumption, and the means to produce content for others to consume. Each of the previous examples has an aspect of “power” embedded in it that is often a reflection of an individual’s knowledge.

Using a Microphone

Table 3.35 shows who is given greater voice via the use of a microphone. Microphones not only provide greater voice to those shown but also suggest that such individuals have something that a large group of others wish to hear. With 74% of all depictions, males dominate this context. Whites, with 73% of all depictions, also dictate the frame. Blacks (23%) come in a distant second. Like the context of “pointing” addressed previously, we see that Blacks and Whites nearly totalize the frame. In fact, only one image, which is a Hispanic female, exists that is neither a White nor Black individual. We find an expected outcome of these numbers. Black and White males make up 70% of all persons depicted using a microphone. Noteworthy in this is the ratios of Black male to female use and White male to female use. White men are shown slightly more than 2 to 1 compared to their female counterparts; however, Black males are depicted 8 to 1 over their female peers. In short, Black and White males are shown having something to say and worthy to be heard. Even so, White males dominate this context with 49% of all depictions, and Black males merely tie White females with 21% of all images. Thus, the narrative constructed via microphone usage suggests White male

power.

Using a Camera

Cameras are a powerful agent for constructing “reality” and allow their users to select among a barrage of possible perspectives. Each potential perspective can perpetuate a different narrative. Table 3.34 shows who is given this power. Males (50%) and females (50%) are shown equally. Whites, however, dominate the number of photographers with 60% of all representations. Among Whites, males and females are evenly distributed. The remaining 40% of photographers is composed equally of Blacks and Middle Easterners. Again, Whites combined with Blacks dominate the space and make up 80% of all depictions. These results, thus, display an absence of any Asian, Native American, or Hispanic from shaping “reality” via the camera. In summary, White males, along with White females, lead this context with 30% of all representations. Thus, depictions of camera usage suggest White male power.

Using a Computer

We are living in the era of the computer. No technology in our present age has such utility for an individual. Examining the individuals depicted using a computer, one finds that groups are more evenly distributed than in the previous technological classes.

Gender as a class has almost exact distribution. Males (49%) and females (51%) are both visually depicting using a computer (see Table 3.33). If only one image was shifted from a female depicted to a male, we would have “perfect” balance in distribution. So, there appears to be no visual disparity regarding gender and access to computers.

Similar to gender, the representations of racial groups using the computer also begin to highlight diversity (see Table 3.33). With the exception of Native Americans, all racial groups have at least seven images showing them using a computer. Even though White individuals make up over 70% of the student population at the schools under investigation, a mere 53% of images of individuals using a computer are White persons. This feature hints at an attempt to undermine the digital divide literature by depicting all groups as having digital access.

Examining more closely, one finds that among the various social signifiers, males and females of the same race have fairly equal distribution. There is one exception, however. Asian females have *twice* as many images as their male peers. As a narrative, this outcome suggests that while men and women of other racial groups are similar in their computer use, Asian females are more adept at using a computer than their male counterparts.

White males, along with White females, are centered in this context. With 27% of all depictions, White males and White females are the only two subject positions with double digit percentages. Compared to other racial groups, this finding suggests that White males have more access and more knowledge when it comes to computers. As such, it *hints* at White male power.

Teaching: White Males

The centering of White males and power may be further perpetuated as a narrative when we examine images related to teaching. As the previous chapter demonstrated, there are numerous subgroups within or related to teaching. This section will examine the following: (1) teaching children, (2) teaching adults, (3) teaching with an absent

audience, and (4) those wearing regalia at graduation.

Teaching Children: White Males

Within the group of depictions of teaching children, Table 3.17 initially suggests a narrative dominated by females. Examining the outcomes presented in Table 3.29, one can notice that White males are centered to some extent. Although White males are not the largest group within the overall context, they do dominate all male representations.

Teaching Adults: White Males

We find a representational shift from the dominance women have in the “teaching children” group when we interpret images of professors. Simply addressing gender, one finds that 65% of all images, where a professor has a noticeable audience, are male. With only 35% of such representations being female, we can quickly see a distinction via gender alone. To look more deeply into this context, one need only examine the racial make up of the two genders as shown teaching adults.

White males make up a whopping 82% of male professor images. Unlike the images of female professors, however, the group of males depicted are more diverse. No racial group is absent. The second most common male professor shown is a Black male (12%). Asians and Hispanics are tied for third with just over 2%, and Middle Eastern males make up only 1%.

Not only do White males dominate the context when compared to their male peers but we also find that they are the most common subject position in all depictions. White males make up approximately 54% of all college professors shown teaching to an audience. This outcome further advances the visual narrative of White male power.

Teaching Without an Audience: White Males

Another group of professors under investigation is those who have no audience present in the image. An example of this would be a White male pointing to a complex math equation on a blackboard, while turning as if to address an off-camera or out-of-frame group. Without an evident audience, we can assume, given the image is on a university homepage, that the course is a college course. This group, however, creates some complexity for study. On one hand, one may consider dropping this group entirely from investigation because teaching is a social activity that necessitates an audience. One cannot teach the air. On the other hand, images and photos presuppose a viewer. At the very least, a photographer took the picture. Moreover, such images may suggest that the viewer of the homepage insert him/herself into the space of the photographer. In short, they promote a perspective in which the viewer is cast into the role of a student in the class and given the point of view as such.

Before getting into the details of these images, one should consider the symbolic significance of the *viewer as audience*. With such a frame, we have actually increased the notoriety of those shown. They are more visually noteworthy than their peers whose classes and audiences are depicted because the range of those who the professor appears qualified to teach is increased. In images where the audience is shown, we find who is qualified to teach whom. For instance, White male professors are shown with a diversity of students. Conversely, women and non-White male professors are most commonly shown teaching other non-Whites and/or women. This attribute itself is a manifestation of power; however, it becomes further enhanced as we shift to the frame where the *viewer* takes the position of audience. By having the viewer take on the position as student, two

quick phenomena occur. First, the viewer is cast into a subordinate role. Thus, nonaudience images are even more powerful because they “force” the viewer into a narrative where they are already always subordinate. Second, they suggest that teachers within their frame can teach *anyone* because the viewer can hold any subject position.

Table 3.31 shows the gender composition of professors teaching to an invisible audience. Males outnumber females three to one. With this result, males are shown at higher rates than they are when the audience *is* shown. Much like the images in which a professor’s audience is depicted, the racial ratios of teachers shown are quite different between male and female professors.

While White females have the largest percent representation (55%) among females, they do not dominate this frame as in the context where students are shown. Black females are, indeed, the second largest (45%) and only other racial group shown. Here, they not only do not tie Asian females but also compete significantly with the White female depictions. The absence of any other racial group reinforces, again, the dichotomous thinking of a Black/White binary when it comes to race.

We should address the racial composition of male professors teaching without an audience. Male professors shown without an audience have a more diverse composition than their female counterparts. White male professors have the highest percent representation (53%) but do not dominate the frame as they do when an audience is present (82%). Each racial group is depicted in the male professor category. Surprisingly, the second most likely racial group in this category is Hispanic male professors (15%). Following them, one finds Black and Middle Easterners (12%). Asian males comprise the smallest group (9%). Combining these findings with the idea that greater symbolic power

exists when the viewer is forced into the student role, we must assert that males are given this dominant position of authority.

White males dominate this context. They are shown in 40% of all images where a professor is teaching without an audience. In fact, White females have the next largest percent representation and are shown in only 13% of such images. This outcome furthers the White male power narrative.

On the institutional homepages, professors are not always shown teaching. Another group of images that have professors clearly present are those depictions that display a graduation ceremony.

Graduation Images: White Males and Regalia

During inception, professors dress in regalia that distinguish them as “above” those individuals in the audience wearing cap and gown. We find nearly 80% of those in regalia are male. We discover, here, that men, as professors, are shown in a position of authority more than women. The visual narrative deepens as one examines those with PhDs from those with Master’s. Here, males make up 92% of PhDs.¹⁵ Race and subject position should also be examined.

In depictions of individuals in regalia, Whites dominate the show. They make up approximately 68% of all persons in regalia. As may be predictable from previous contextual frames, Blacks come in second (25%). Hispanics (5%) and Asians (3%) are the other groups shown; thus, Middle Easterners lack any representations. Again, we

¹⁵ All of these values are comparing the totality of source. As noted on Table 3.27, these values change percentages when we remove Historically Black Colleges from the source.

stumble onto the Black/White binary of representation with White depicted *more* than twice as often as Black.

One finds that White males are the most common group (55%) when we look at specific subject positions. Black males (15%) beat out White females (13%) in their number of depictions. This is followed by Black females (10%) who are the last group to have percent representation in double digits. Hispanic males (5%) and Asian males (3%) are the only other groups shown. Thus, Asian females, Hispanic females, and all Middle Eastern male individuals lack any representation. As a visual narrative, then, this tells the story of White male power. They literally “run the show” in this context.

Depictions of professors whether teaching or attending graduation ceremonies are not the only images to show power explicitly. Power can also be seen in the nonteaching authority class.

Nonteaching Authority: White Males

The class of “authority” represents a disparate group of attributes and roles. In many ways, the “authority” group turns to the heart of this research. As a group, it includes coaches, political figures, clergy, and teachers. Having already addressed teaching images, we can examine the narrative presented within the “nonteaching” class, which will be the focus of this subsection.

Nonteaching Authority: Clergy and Coaches

The nonteaching authority class can be further divided. Since the number of depictions is so small, I have blended representations of coaches and clergy into one class called “nonteaching authority” and left the various images depicting political figures

separate. Inspecting Table 3.32, we can see a clear gender bias within the nonteaching authority numbers. There are six depictions of males in nonteaching authority positions and only one female. The five males are White or Black individuals and fall into both the coaches group as well as the clergy group. One clergy member is Hispanic. The lone female is a Black female who is part of the clergy. Like other groupings, we find a propensity toward showing Whites and Blacks at the expense of Asians, Middle Easterners, and Native Americans. Since “clergy” as a group highlights religious convictions, we could consider that the category itself is biased since many Asians, Middle Easterners, and Native Americans hold different religious convictions. However, Hispanics as a group are regularly associated with the Catholic faith, so it seems somewhat odd that only one Hispanic clergy member is shown.

Remaining focused on the clergy aspect of nonteaching authority depictions, one finds two interesting elements. The first is how it constructs a narrative of who can be “trusted,” and the second is a subtle, yet significant, affirmation of hetero-normative and conservative values. Much like medical professionals, clergy are often entrusted with detailed, personal information. With the representations of clergy on the homepages being dominated by White males, one can only infer that the institutions of higher education are suggesting that non-Whites and females are less trustworthy.

The second element of the clergy subclass is an image of a priest standing next to a bride and groom who are both White individuals. A critic may argue that a single image holds little symbolic weight. This claim, in my opinion, is utterly misguided. The given image is highlighted by its uniqueness. Any connection between marriage and formal education is tenuous at best, so there is no need for this image, yet it appears nonetheless.

As an image, it serves to reinforce hetero-normative ideals about marriage as well as suggest other conservative ideology focused on antimiscegenation. Although one would not expect to see an image of two gay men or a lesbian couple, the lack of such a depiction plays to the “invisibility” aspect of power. Gross (2001) argues, “non-representation maintains the powerless status of groups that do not possess significant material or political power bases....[and those] at the bottom of the various power hierarchies will be kept in their places in part through their relative invisibility” (p. 406).

Nonteaching Authority: Political Figures

In depictions of political figures, males outnumber females in representation 6 to 1. One finds that the university homepages have images of three U.S. Presidents, the current Vice President of the United States, two Supreme Court Justices, and a former Vice Presidential candidate. As such, the group includes Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, John F. Kennedy, Joe Biden, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, and Sarah Palin. Within this group, Palin stands out. Each of the others listed is within the Executive or Judicial branch of government. Palin could fall into the Executive group. Each of the others, however, is at the federal level, which would, again, make her unique because she was at the state level.¹⁶ Obviously, she also stands out because she is the only woman on the list. Yet, one finds, investigating more deeply, a reason for her inclusion. She is the only one whose image appears on their alma mater’s homepage. In short, the male political figures are given higher symbolic value because they are depicted by institutions that they did not attend.

¹⁶ Although she was a Vice Presidential candidate, she never held that position.

Analyzing the executive/judicial divide presented by the political figures shown, another element is suggested. Evaluating the party affiliation and record of the political figures, those under the Executive branch of government are liberal and those under the judicial branch are conservative. Here, institutions appear to suggest a political state with a liberal executive but a conservative court.

The political figure images suggest racial preference. All political figures are either Black or White. Whites are by far the dominant group shown accounting for all but one of the images (i.e., Clarence Thomas). Again, universities have excluded an array of groups: Asians, Middle Easterners, Native Americans, and Hispanics.

Other than the lone female and sole Black male, all political figures are White males. Given this feature, White males make up 75% of those shown with political authority. This result furthers the narrative of White male power.

Portraits: White Males

Portraits hold a rare and special place in the source. Those portraits that have only one individual present will be the focus of this section. Since only one individual is shown, he/she does not have to compete for the attention of the viewer. Those who have their portraits taken have symbolic power because they are the “center of attention.” As noted in the previous chapter, there are actually two elements to investigate when looking at portraits in the source. The first is the rate of depiction. Obviously, it would be a completely different narrative if all portraits were of Hispanic females or if no portraits of White females were present. Essentially, this is a case of focusing on the quantity of images. On the other hand, the second means for analyzing said images is to look at facial prominence, where higher scores mean that the individual is closer to the camera. Facial

prominence scores correlate to perceptions of integrity, honesty, intelligence, and other positive traits an individual may possess. In visual media like magazines, females have consistently had lower scores than their male peers and non-Whites have had lower facial prominence than their White counterparts. Thus, this section will conclude by examining facial prominence in portraits on university homepages.

Rates of Representation Within Portraits: White Males

The rate of representation can serve as a comparison to the “baseline” of overall institutional demographics. Though this is not the focus of the current work, it is included because it takes little time to determine. If one simply blends information found in Table 3.1 with that of Table 3.36, one arrives with useful information constructing Table 4.2.

In Table 4.2, we see that Hispanics and Blacks have an increased representation in portraits, while Asians and Whites have a decreased amount. This information suggests that institutions tactically select some groups, like Blacks and Hispanics, to promote diversity while excluding others like Asians.

Let us now turn to the rate of representations for gender and racial groups to see what narrative is constructed. We need only analyze Table 3.36 to see the rates of gender in portraits. Some scholars may be surprised to find that men (51%) are shown in portraits more often than women (49%). Women are often used in advertisements to promote products. It seems, however, colleges construct their online identity to slightly privilege males via portraits.

The races of those in portraits should also be examined. Not surprisingly, Whites, with approximately two-thirds of all portraits, rule the frame. Blacks (14%) and

Hispanics (11%) round out the top three groups. These findings are expressed in Table 4.2. Now, we should analyze the rates of subject positions in portraits.

Since Whites are shown with the greatest rate, we should not be surprised that White males (35%) and White females (31%) are the two most common portraits. Here, White privilege is depicted fairly equally among men and women. No other subject position even makes it to a double digit percentage in their representations. The third largest group, Black females, makes up just over 7% of portraits. Unlike many classes, we find that all subject positions, however, are shown in portraits. These findings further suggest a visual narrative in which White males are centered.

Facial Prominence Within Portraits: White Males

We find that the symbolic power of portraits is hierarchical. There are some portraits that have more “power” than others. This phenomenon is expressed in the facial prominence score, which reflects the ratio of face to body of an individual in a portrait.

Previous literature, as expressed in Chapter 1, has noted that, within traditional media, women and non-Whites have consistently been shown with lower scores. There are two reasons for these occurrences. Within previous literature, the reason expressed is that those with higher eminence given to their face are perceived to be more honest, trustworthy, and intelligent. Moreover, given our social propensities, White males are assigned these traits and women and non-Whites are not. However, there is a secondary justification that is possible and reinforces expectations that women and non-Whites would have lower scores. This rationale is the aesthetic, and sexualized, nature of the “gaze.” There is rarely any female image in magazines such as *Maxim*, *Playboy*, or

Penthouse that is *only* of the female's face. In essence, the curvature of the female form is expressed through distancing and, by extension, lower prominence of their face.

One could compose two potential reasons for attributing positive traits to those with high facial prominence. First, we often believe to “know” a person is to know his/her face. Rarely would one claim that they knew someone solely from a picture of an individual's foot. Thus, people often give positive attributes to those they “know” over those that are strangers or acquaintances. This idea gives a rationale to why images with high facial prominence are given positive traits, but it does not tell the whole story. The second rationale applies to psychological adjustment to images. If we look at Expectancy Violation Theory and proxemics as a field of investigation, we allow some people into our intimate range of space and others are held to a public distance. Since a viewer cannot manage the distance an individual in a photo is and it would appear odd to “move” the photo itself further from us by stepping back from the image, we are left negotiating the inability to create distance. To negotiate this dissonance, we merely apply positive traits and attributes to those with high facial prominence scores.

Though White males do not have the highest average facial prominence within the source, we do find them having the second largest facial prominence within one of the geographic regions. Table 3.42a shows that White males have the second highest facial prominence within the North region. This result adds minor credence to the narrative centering White male power.

Ethnic Attire: White Males

Within the source, there is a small subset of images that depict individuals in ethnic attire. Though it is a small set, it is not insignificant. The group includes those wearing (1) a feather headdress, (2) yarmulke or kippah, (3) burka, (4) kimono, (5) various traditional African attire, (6) sherwani, (7) salwar kameez, and (8) an array of other ethnic clothing. We should begin with addressing the gender composition of such images.

Women are shown in ethnic attire 2 to 1 over men. This rate jumps significantly if we merely address some of the males shown. Every White male in this group (8) is wearing a yarmulke. Though this is traditional garb for orthodox Jews, it is not essentially “ethnic” attire in the same way that a kimono or sherwani is.¹⁷ Temporarily removing those wearing a yarmulke from the group, we find that the representations of women jump from 67% of all those in ethnic attire to *over* 80% depicted. Drawing from Edward Said’s work, one could claim that such representations of “orientalism” are used to exoticize females. Making females seem exotic and unique prompts the male gaze to sexualize these and shift the exotic into the erotic. Such images are blatant depictions of diversity, which universities wish to promote.

Though nearly excluded in all other previous contexts, Middle Eastern individuals have the highest percent representation (36%) when it comes to ethnic attire. The second largest group is Whites (22%); however, as noted previously, 80% of Whites in this

¹⁷ In many ways, it is not as simple as it appears. The yarmulke denotes religious affiliation, but some of the other attire under “ethnic attire” does to an extent too. The burka, for example, is a mainstay of Islam, and even the Native American headdress has implications for the spirituality of the tribal members. It seems, however, that the yarmulke as attire signifies religion, but each of the other types signifies race/ethnicity and may *suggest* religion.

group are Jewish individuals wearing the yarmulke. Excluding individuals with yarmulke, we find that Middle Eastern individuals jump to 43% of representations and Whites drop to only 5%. With the exclusion of the Jewish images, the second largest group becomes Blacks. Blacks make up 24% of ethnic attire images when the yarmulke is removed from the group.

From a cynical standpoint, one could argue that the clear demarcation of Middle Easterners with ethnic attire is a byproduct of the September eleventh attacks. Individuals may be anxious when an “enemy” is hidden. This assertion is not to suggest that all Middle Eastern individuals are terrorist but rather that the average American still has a difficult time disassociating the link between the two groups. If the university does not show any Middle Eastern individuals, it will not fully be promoting diversity. Conversely, if it shows such individuals in traditional Western clothing, it may promote the aforementioned anxiety in the viewer. As such, the institutions come to another frame. They show the individuals in ethnic attire to promote diversity as well as relieve some of the potential anxiety. As a narrative, it essentially says, “See, we have a variety of people and they are *clearly* an Other.” Here, however, we see a visual narrative that defines Middle Easterners *only* as Other since they are not represented to any degree in other images.

Black individuals in ethnic attire appear to fall into one of three groups. The first group is the burka; only one Black female falls into this group. The second is the wearing of traditional African attire by African natives. The third is traditional African attire appropriated by African Americans. The first group is an anomaly. The second two groups tell the story of heritage and pride.

Since Middle Eastern and female are the two largest groups of those shown in ethnic attire, one could assume that Middle Eastern females make up the largest class when addressing the intersection of race and gender. This outcome is the case. With 27% of all depictions of people in ethnic attire being Middle Eastern females, the class is the largest, and it is followed by Black females (20%). Noteworthy is the absence or minimal depictions of various groups: Hispanic females are the only female group to lack *any* representation. The only male groups with minimal images are Black, Middle Eastern, and White. All White males are represented by orthodox Jews, and Hispanic males are not shown at all. This means that 73% of all depictions of ethnic attire excluding those with yarmulke are non-White females. Females are shown in this way to be exotic; however, not all females are shown in this fashion (i.e., Hispanics) and some are minimally depicted (e.g., Whites).

There is another element to the ethnic attire depictions. With the exception of three files, every image has a racially homogenous group. Obviously, if only one individual is present in the frame it is, by default, homogenous. One of the three exceptions to this homogeneity is a graduation picture. The other two heterogeneous images are similar to each other. Both have an individual White female in the company of “natives.” The non-White individuals in both pictures are seen as natives because the image appears to have been taken in another country. In the first, an older, White female with glasses is wearing ethnic attire and is walking a path in some mountains. She is followed by two Middle Eastern females in ethnic attire. In the second image, a younger White female in traditional Western attire is posing near a straw hut with a Black male and female who are both wearing traditional African attire. The young White female is

the center of the frame, and the two Black individuals are leaning in to be “closer” to the White woman.

In the context of ethnic attire, these two images of heterogeneous racial composition should be investigated further. Before addressing them, however, one should point out that, throughout the entire source, racial heterogeneous groups are fairly rare. In almost all such groups, White individuals are present. An image with a heterogeneous group of non-White individuals is *extremely* rare in the source. As a narrative, this suggests two potential readings. On the one hand, it demonstrates that individuals are more comfortable around their “own kind” whether that is White, Black, Hispanic, etc. This result may, however, not be an active process by the individual. For example, in graduation images where students graduating are often placed in alphabetical order, we would be more likely to see groups with ethnic names in close proximity. In short, if a picture is taken of a row in which “Martinez” as a name is represented, we may find a grouping of Hispanic individuals. From a cynical reading, the lack of heterogeneous groups that lack a White individual may suggest that Whites must be present to “watch” the Others. If too many images on a single site had numerous heterogeneously racial, non-White individuals within their frame, it may increase anxiety in a White viewer since such groups are socially not encountered often.

Unlike the previous contexts, we find that the absence of White males within this class suggests that White males are not “Other-ed.” White males are shown with power in the other groups, but one finds that, here, they “gain” by their lack of depictions. This result furthers the narrative of White males as centered because they are not marginalized via their attire.

Deconstructing the “Center”: Challenges to the White Male Power Narrative

Not all findings in Chapter 3 support the visual narrative of White male power. In fact, some challenge it and decenter White males. The visual narrative that challenges White male power can be seen in the following classes: (1) teaching children, (2) graduation, (3) studying, and (4) portraits.

Teaching Children: A Challenge to the White Male Power Narrative

Focusing on the gender of teachers is a good starting point. As previously noted, males dominate most of the teaching contexts. Male teachers account for 63% of all teaching images, while females make up only 37%. This result alone suggests a bias toward male depictions of authority; however, much more is at work here. A quick scan of Tables 3.29 through 3.31 shows that males and females have different distribution when observing who they are teaching. In the category of “teaching adults,” males outnumber females 2:1, yet in the context of “teaching children,” females outnumber males approximately 3:1.

Using Tables 3.29-3.31, we can also get a feel for how race as well as the subject positions of teachers is distributed. Since we have already noted that females are more likely to be shown teaching children than males, we should begin by looking at the race of female teachers in such roles. Of the 20 depictions of females in such instances, more than half (54%) are White. Asians and Blacks are tied for the second most representations (2) making up less than 8% of the images, and Hispanics and Middle Easterners are tied for last with only one depiction each. In many ways, the role espoused by elementary teachers is one blending trust, patience, commitment, knowledge, and compassion.

Compared to their male counterparts, females are constructed as more readily having these attributes. Yet, we must also make explicit that White females dominate this frame. Can Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Middle Easterner females not be trusted with our children? Do they lack the skills necessary to developing the abilities of the next generation? Of course not. But, if we trust the visual narrative, we plainly see that White females are given more trust over the maintenance and support of children.

Table 3.29 shows us the racial make up of males who teach children. Those males teaching kids are almost always White (83%). The only exception is a Hispanic male. Here, we see that men are not trusted with our youth to the same extent as women. In fact, some males (i.e., Asian, Black, and Middle Eastern) are not trusted at all. Much like the profession of being a “nurse,” the elementary teacher is often a gendered term. This “gender-ing” of an occupation can explain why more females than males are shown. It does not, however, account for the disparity of racial representation within images of the profession.

White females (54%) dominate this context and decenter White males *slightly*. Such results suggest a challenge to the visual narrative of White male power.

Graduation: A Challenge to the White Male Power Narrative

Within graduation images, female students in cap and gown are shown dramatically more often than males. Graduating females make up 70% of all students shown in such cases, yet their male counterparts are shown only 30% of the time. If education is a key to economic stability, then such ratios suggest that women are given a privileged status in graduation images.

Investigating the racial composition of those in cap and gown as well as looking at the subject positions of such individuals is the next step. Those graduating are represented by the following groups: White (51%), Black (24%), Hispanic (12%), Asian (8%), and Middle Eastern (6%). Much like previous classes, the White and Black individuals combine to dominate the frame (75%). Unlike some previous groupings, all groups are shown to some extent. To get a better grasp of these graduating students, we will turn our attention to individual subject positions as signifiers.

White and Black females are the two largest groups of graduates, and make up a majority of those in cap and gown (55%). White males compose only a fraction of such individuals (18%). All non-White males combine to make up only a mere 11% of individuals shown graduating. Here, the absence of non-White males suggests that other groups are more successful at obtaining a college degree. This result is further perpetuated as one examines differences of representation between specific groupings. For example, there are *almost three times* as many Hispanic females shown graduating as Hispanic males. Furthermore, images of Black female students graduating are almost *20 times* more common than their Black male counterparts. This disparity exists even among Whites where women are shown graduating approximately *twice* as often as men. These rates, however, are not completely surprising since women make up 57% of graduates at every level of college education (Marklein, 2005). Yet, the 70% of women shown in images is a significantly larger group. Clearly, the institutions are promoting women over men for those shown in cap and gown, and this feature challenges the previous visual narrative of White male power.

Studying: A Challenge to the White Male Power Narrative

Graduation images promote a narrative that shows women to be more successful at completing an undergraduate education. One potential narrative that could challenge this claim is found in images where students are studying. If women study more, we would expect them to graduate more often. In essence, then, the visual narrative created by examining images of studying has the potential to reinforce and reify the currently constructed graduation narrative.

With 63% of individuals shown studying being female, we begin to see the narrative unfold further. College women are hard at work to attain their degrees. Men, on the other hand, are shown in only 37% of the “studying” images. Though not identical, these numbers are similar to the degree to which both sexes are depicted graduating. This difference of around 7% also occurs when we examine race alone. For example, Hispanics make up 11% of those studying and 12% of those graduating, and Asians account for 10% of individuals studying and 8% of graduates shown. The narrative, however, becomes more precarious as we address specific subject positions.

Although most subject positions have a correlation between the degree to which they are shown studying and the rate at which they are shown graduating, Black males and Black females have dramatic differences. Only 10% of those shown studying are Black females, yet Black females make up 23% of students depicted graduating. Conversely, Black males account for approximately 7% of individuals studying; however, they make up only 1% of graduates. To interpret such a trend, the narrative would need to take one of two forms: intelligence or privilege. From the intelligence narrative, one would claim that the representations are such that Black females are

extremely smart and can, therefore, graduate with only minor studying. If this is accepted as the narrative, however, we must apply it to Black males as well. In this case, the story would suggest that Black males, for all their studying, are not smart and, thus, do not graduate. A more cynical reading of the narrative argues preferential treatment is at work. In this narrative, Black females do not have to work as hard because they are given an academic privilege. Conversely, Black males can do all the work they want yet fail to be given any privilege. From a “radicalized conservative” perspective, one could claim that the narrative reinforces that those who garner multiple signifiers of being historically oppressed are given more leniency. Between the two competing narratives of intelligence or privilege, it seems more applicable that an institution of higher education would be constructing the former rather than the latter. In either case, one still finds that Black females are shown in a more “positive” light than their male counterparts. It is interesting that this narrative only plays out within the Black community. All other racial groups are free from this tension between their gendered subgroups.

We can also compare Black females to White males. White males have the second highest percentage of those shown studying (22%). According to the visual narrative, they study more than *twice* as much as Black females (10%). Even though White males study to this extent compared to their Black female peers, White males are shown graduating less than Black females. There is, therefore, a disparity between work demonstrated in the form of studying and reward for investment. Again, only two potential narratives come to mind. Either (1) White men are poor students and Black females are great students making the quality of the studying different or (2) White males are held to a higher standard than their Black female peers and the diploma each earns is

different. In the first case, White males are shown as inept or unintelligent and Black females efficient and smart. In the second case, a continuum exists in which on one side, White males are held to a raised standard and on the other side, Black females are given a lower standard to achieve. In each of these potential cases, the narrative of White male power is called into question. In the first, White male power is undermined by White males' lack of intelligence; in the second, White male power is challenged by being given a different standard.

Portraits: A Challenge to the White Male Power Narrative

As previously asserted, portraits are a significant group within the source because not only are they the largest group but also they “center” the people within them. To better interpret how portraits can potentially challenge the White male power narrative, one should address the rates of representation and the facial prominence of those within portraits.

Rates of Representation Within Portraits: Challenging the White Male Power Narrative

Within the White male power narrative, we highlighted how White males are represented more than any other subject position. One should be aware that, while this is true, we also find a significant number of White females shown. White males are shown in 35% of all portraits, but White females come in a close second with 31% of all portraits. While not completely subverting the representations of White males, this result promotes a narrative that begins to challenge White male power.

Facial Prominence in Portraits: Challenging the White Male Power Narrative

To begin to analyze facial prominence scores, we should address gender. Within the source, the portraits that have females have an average facial prominence of 61.4%, yet portraits depicting males have only a score of 59.7%. Females are also shown more often in the “soap opera” shot or extreme close up, where the camera is so close that the viewer does not see the individual’s full face. As used in “soap operas,” this shot may suggest an emotional appeal for those shown. Finding females to have higher average “face-to-body” ratios is an unexpected result. In previous literature, males consistently have higher scores than females.

The story promoted by colleges, then, suggests that women should be seen as more trustworthy, intelligent, and honest. Extending the previous logic that lower scores may denote a sexualized “gaze” of the individual, one could argue that males are placed in the position of the aesthetic; however, this assertion would seem a stretch.¹⁸ One potential liberal rationale for the distancing may be that those who have power are not easily accessible to the viewer (i.e., distance “reflects” power). Though this reasoning has some logic, there is no other evidence in the source or in the facial prominence literature to support it. In any case, the average male score is lower than the average of all scores for portraits (60.5%).

As we consider the facial prominence scores of various subject positions (see Table 3.40), it seems useful to more fully address those of Middle Eastern individuals who have the smallest average score. A number of the portraits of Middle Easterners show them wearing ethnic attire. In many ways, such individuals are suggested to be

¹⁸ This idea is not too remarkable a stretch, if we notice on Table 3.18 that males dominate the camera view of being “observed.” But, it is quite an unexpected possibility.

Muslim. With the current US conflicts and “War on Terror,” the American psyche has anxiety toward such individuals. Not only could individuals selecting the images have this anxiety but even if they lack it, they may be aware of the social norms and, as such, select to “distance” Middle Eastern individuals in portraits. The lower facial prominence score serves two functions. First, it creates “distance” as to possibly “keep an eye” on those who are Middle Eastern. Second, the distancing also displaces them as to remove the potential of framing them as “trustworthy.” This feature is one of the sad stories within the visual narrative. It hints at institutionalized stereotyping.

The facial prominence scores of other subject positions should be examined. We can look at each subject position, the difference between genders of the same race, and compare groups to the median facial prominence score. Looking solely at subject position, we find that Native American females have the largest average score (73.5%); however, there are only two images of Native American females. If we exclude Native American images due to their limited numbers, we find that Black females have the highest score (70%). The next closest group is more than 5% smaller in the eminence given to their face, Hispanic males (64.3%). Hispanic males are closely followed by Asian females (63.6%) and Hispanic females (60.4%). No other subject position exceeds 60% facial prominence (see Table 3.40). With the exception of Hispanic males, this shows that the largest scores are dominated by non-White females. Again, this outcome seems inconsistent with previous facial prominence literature about gender and race. These results will be further addressed in the following chapter.

When we look at how males and females of the same race compare on facial prominence, we find some interesting attributes. Starting with the *lowest difference* in

scores, we find that White males and females have almost identical averages. The only group that comes close to this lack of difference is Middle Eastern individuals. Male and female Hispanics have a difference of about 4%. All other groups have dramatic differences between the sexes, however. Native Americans (20.5% difference between gender), Asians (5.3%), and Blacks (12%) have distinct degrees of facial prominence that clearly privileges females. Removing the small set of Native Americans, we see that Black females do not simply have the largest facial prominence score but also have the largest difference from their male counterparts. Excluding Middle Eastern individuals, Black males have the smallest facial prominence of any group. Somehow, the story suggests that Black females are the most trustworthy, honest, and intelligent group, but Black men are not trustworthy, honest, and intelligent. This idea parallels some of the previous findings regarding teaching children and “studying” when comparing these two groups.

Another way in which we can analyze the facial prominence scores is by determining the mean score for all portraits (60.5%). Using a split halves design, we can compare those above the mean to those below the mean to see the degree to which groups are shown. For example, if only *one group* is above the average, then it would have an extremely large difference from the others. Knowing the mean score also allows us to determine if any group is fairly average. Hispanic females have an average score that is almost identical to the mean for all portraits. What is more noteworthy, however, is the fact that only *four* subject positions are *above* the mean but *seven* are below it. This outcome suggests that the four groups are shown with significantly larger facial prominence. Since the White male score is in the lower half for facial prominence, we

can interpret it as a challenge to the narrative of White male power.

Summary: Visual Narratives

Using the content from Chapter 3, this chapter has worked to interpret possible narratives promoted by colleges. Looking at the overall rates of depictions within groups, it shows a narrative that privileges portraits more than technology use and sports more than studying. It, then, noted the visual narrative of White male power that emerges from the images. The White male power narrative is not completely stable, however, and a competing narrative of challenging it was explained. The tension between these two competing narratives is addressed in the following chapter, which works to generate a theory about the online depictions of college homepages.

Table 4.1—Subgroups Within Person Class

Subgroup	Number of files
Portraits (single individual)	647
Authority	232
Teaching	207
NonTeaching	18
Political	7
Technology Use	195
Camera	10
Computer	146
Microphone	39
Collegiate Sports	168
Studying	101
Graduation	70
Ethnic Attire	36
Pointing	35
Disability	5*

*Only two of these files relate directly to physical disability.

Table 4.2—Comparison of Portrait Depictions to Institutional Demographics¹⁹

Group	# at Institutions	# depicted in portraits	difference
Black	10%	14%	+4%
Native American	1%	1%	0%
Asian	9%	6%	-3%
Hispanic	7%	11%	+4%
White	71%	66%	-5%

¹⁹ The numbers do not add up to 100% due to the “International” category used by *US News and World Report*.

CHAPTER 5

THEORIZING THE RESULTS AND CONCLUDING

Chapter 1 set the stage by giving an overview of the focus, literature, and methods of the current research. In Chapter 2, the actual procedures used in constructing and organizing the source were explained. After doing so, Chapter 3 pointed out the numerous outcomes and frames that emerged from the source, and Chapter 4, then, analyzed the visual narratives that emerge as a result of chapter three. To conclude, this chapter will do three things. First, it will demonstrate how the current study contributes to previous research. Postman (1995) argued that a narrative is not “a definitive, ultimate truth rendering all competing narrative null and void...the point is that profound but contradictory ideas may exist side by side” (p. 107). An overview of Chapter 4 suggests two competing visual narratives, so the second section of this chapter theorizes the results found in Chapter 4. Third, it will conclude by addressing potential avenues of future research.

Contributing to Research

Any research should contribute to previous work of the same nature. This study is no exception. This section will address the areas in which this study has advanced research. As stated in Chapter 1, the current study contributes to such fields of inquiry as feminism and gender studies, critical race theory, disability studies, and the spaces of intersection between these fields. The following subsections will show how the current

work aids these fields of inquiry. In addition, this research provides advancements for (1) literature about college homepages, (2) the application of grounded theory for visual artifacts, and (3) facial prominence scholars.

Advancing Subject Position Fields of Inquiry

The general focus of the current study addressed various social signifiers. Given this focus, it intersected with such areas as feminism, critical race theory, and disability studies. Although this research focused on numerous social signifiers simultaneously, it contributes to each of these areas of inquiry that are often “singularly-focused.”

Feminists, critical race theorists, and scholars of disability studies can all benefit from many of the findings of this work. Each is benefited in two ways. First, they will find ample evidence that *directly* advances their arguments. Second, they will also find outcomes that challenge some of their assertions. Such challenge advances the field’s thoughts by encouraging them to reformulate and strengthen their ideas within the “marketplace of ideas.” The following subsections address each these fields of inquiry individually and suggests how each is both directly advanced as well as challenged.

Feminism

Feminist scholars focus on social, economic, and political disparities between males and females. They assert that the social structure is patriarchal, which provides privileges to males at greater rates than females. In short, it argues that males are centered and females are marginalized.

The White male power narrative described in Chapter 4 provides evidence and strength to feminist thought. It suggests that images on university homepages center

White males when it comes to power. The White male power narrative explained in Chapter 4 is not the only evidence for feminists that males are centered. For example, Table 3.21 shows how males and females are distributed across institutional rank. When it comes to rates of representations, females only outnumber males at the lowest ranked schools (i.e., T4). This finding suggests the centering of males within the given power structure. Thus, this study has contributed directly to feminism by providing such evidence.

The research also offers a challenge for feminism. As noted in Chapter 4, there are a number of challenges to the White male power narrative. Most notably, one finds that females (61.4%) are depicted with higher “face-to-body” ratios in portraits than males (59.7%). Therefore, the images of females are not distanced, and by extension sexualized, as feminists would predict. Additionally, the higher ratios for females correlate to greater perceptions of positive attributes like intelligence, trustworthiness, and honesty. As a challenge to feminist thought, this outcome provides a rich, new area which feminists can investigate to determine how prevalent it is.

Critical Race Theory

The contribution of the research for critical race theorists parallels what has been addressed regarding feminism. Critical race theorists focus on the disparities between Whites and non-Whites. The White male power narrative discussed in Chapter 4 provides critical race theorists direct evidence of the marginalizing of non-Whites within the visual depictions on university homepages. The research, however, provides other evidence of the centering of White and marginalizing of non-Whites. For example, 77% of all individuals shown in PhD regalia in graduation images are White (see Table 3.27).

Within this context, Whites are centered. Moreover, this study submits that in almost all contexts two groups, Native Americans and Middle Eastern individuals, are extremely marginalized. Native Americans are almost completely absent from the source, and Middle Eastern individuals are rarely shown. When shown, Middle Eastern individuals are depicted in either a marginalizing fashion (e.g., in ethnic attire) or in the weakest possible way (e.g., the lowest facial prominence of any group). Thus, the research does not simply provide evidence of the center of White but also shows cases where non-Whites are marginalized.

The study also suggests a challenge for critical race theorists. The “face-to-body” ratios of non-Whites are higher than those for Whites (see Table 3.40). There is, however, the one exception provided by Middle Eastern individuals. Like feminists, critical race theorists can consider this outcome a fresh area of investigation and seek to examine its pervasiveness.

Disability Studies

Disability studies as an academic field emerged only recently. With the “youth” of this field, this research can potentially contribute more than to the other aforementioned fields addressed. Moreover, the findings of the current work supply more evidence of direct contribution and almost no challenge.

There are two key areas in which the study advances disability studies. The first is the image of 10 individuals in wheelchairs playing basketball. As suggested in the previous chapter, their depiction is in the background and “serves” as evidence to the foregrounded image. Here, they are not shown in their right, and the image may serve as

a new type of “tokenism.” This outcome can serve those working in disability studies by making them aware of this potentially new form of “tokenism.”

This research contributes to disability studies in another way too. The study advances work in disability studies by addressing images of building access, which includes stairs and ramps. The previous chapters have suggested that stairs are a much more “centered” feature of images than ramps. Scholars in disability studies can take such a finding and examine other images in other context to determine the dominance allotted to stairs over ramps.

Disability studies scholars may be surprised by the rate of representations for those with disabilities. Initially, such scholars would believe that individuals with disabilities would be completely absent from visual representations on university homepages. This belief, however, is not confirmed by this study. Those with disabilities are shown. Furthermore, the rate of depiction for those with disabilities seems in line with overall demographics regarding disability. Though this outcome does not challenge per se those addressing the concerns of the disabled, it may advance their work by suggesting that they have increased awareness about such issues.

Contributing to Other Research

This study also advances research in areas outside of those specifically focused on subject position. It does this in three specific instances. First, it advances the literature on college homepage depictions. Second, it contributes to understand about employing grounded theory as a method for examining visual artifacts. Third, it adds to literature surrounding the facial prominence within images. The following sections speak to each of these contributions.

Advancing the Literature About College Homepages

Academic research focused on representations of race and sex on college homepages is almost nonexistent. The research of Boyer et al. (2006) is the only study to specifically address the intersection of racial and gendered representations on university homepages. No researcher has followed up or advanced their research since. This study has addressed the gap and provided insight into this critical area. It aids this literature by not only examining “if” various subject positions were present, like Boyer et al., but also focused on “how” individuals were depicted. As such, it advances and adds to the scant literature on college homepage depictions of subject positions.

Contributing to Work on Facial Prominence

The method of facial prominence has been used throughout this study. The “theory” that emerges from the method, however, has only tangentially been addressed. Researchers of “face-to-body” ratio have argued that larger ratios increase positive perceptions of the individual. The consistency of findings that show that males and Whites are the beneficiaries of this outcome are incorporated under the theoretical frame known as “face-ism.” Matthews (2007) provided evidence that face-ism is still present in mainstream printed media as recent as 2004 by examining the “face-to-body” ratio of images within such magazines as *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Time*.

The current study does not contribute to “face-ism” by confirming previously expected outcomes but by challenging it with new, unexpected findings. Having found that non-Whites and females have higher average facial prominence scores, the current research provides a contrast to all previous literature in the area. There are a couple of potential reasons for this result. First, it could be due to a shift in medium. All previous

researchers have addressed images in “traditional” media like magazines. Future, face-ism researchers would need to address this possibility by examining other online images. Second, the difference between previous “face-ism” findings and this research may be due to the organizations that were analyzed. Universities may be inherently different from magazine publishers. Future studies may attempt to resolve this possibility by examining either printed university materials like brochures or online images promoted by magazine publishers. In any case, the current study provides rich, new terrain for those working on “face-ism.”

Advancing Methods

The current research used a hybrid methodology that has never been employed before. This fact alone could contribute to future researchers who may wish to “replicate” the study in additional contexts or apply it to other phenomena. In addition, it provides both a minor development in dealing with online visual content as well as a more significant advancement to applying the grounded theory approach to visual artifacts.

Dealing with online visual content. Previous researchers attempting to obtain all images associated with a given URL had no explicit method for doing so. In the past, such researchers would essentially have only two means or methods available. First, they could contact the website’s administrator and request the images. This method is respectable because it insures that all images would be obtained. Conversely, it holds an inherent flaw. The website’s administrator would hold the power to determine if and when the images were sent to the researcher. As such, it opens the potential for a gatekeeper to inhibit the work of the researcher. The second method researchers may

have employed was to guess. They could simply refresh the screen on numerous occasions and hope that they had acquired all the images of the URL. Not only is such an act imprecise but it fails to be a *systematic* method.

In Chapter 2, I explained the “20 refreshes rule.” This rule provides a systematic approach or method for researchers attempting to attain images on a specific URL. Therefore, it provides a new method that removes the potential of a gatekeeper or “guessing.” Though the “20 refreshes rule” is only a minor advancement of method, the following subsection will address a more significant methodological advancement asserted by this study.

Grounded theory and visual artifacts. The grounded theory approach has been implemented across a remarkably wide range of phenomena. It has been used to investigate nursing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), organizations (Martin & Turner, 1986), virtual team building (Sarker, Lau, & Sahay, 2001), video game immersion (Brown & Cairns, 2004), cocaine using mothers (Kearney, Murphy, & Rosenbaum, 1994), and various other occurrences. As Chapter 2 pointed out, Clarke (2005) and Figueroa (2008) asserted that grounded theory could be applied to visual materials. No previous scholarship could be located that confirmed the two theorists’ claims.

This research fills the gap between the potential provided by Clarke’s (2005) and Figueroa’s (2008) claims and the lack of any actual, grounded theory research on visual artifacts. In doing so, this study not only confirms the two theorists’ predictions about the application of grounded theory on visual materials but, more importantly, provides an initial example for future researchers. Thus, it delivers a critical “first step” for both grounded theorist as well as visual communication scholars.

Theorizing the Results

In order to create a theory, one should attempt to account for all images previously investigated. As such, I have constructed The (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online. This theory suggests that universities craft an identity through the *balancing* of social signifiers on their homepages. Simultaneously, the various representations of subject positions create *imbalance*. This (im)balance is not in regard to any specific context or type of image but rather exists *within and because of* the totality of images. In order to better understand the theory, one must go back to the empirical evidence found in Chapters 3 and 4.

Stages of Generating the Theory

It can be confusing to read over the various traits that exist within any individual context. Keeping track of males versus females, various racial groups, and the intersection of gender with race for any analysis of context can overwhelm. To simplify, and understand the theory, we need only address the extremes. This process will make the size of the analysis more manageable and more conducive to theoretical formation. This procedure is only, however, the first stage in understanding and crafting the theory. The second stage bifurcates these findings in a pragmatic way as to highlight the theory further.

The Role of Extremes in Theorizing

To examine the extremes, I seek to pull forth from the source only two useful groups for each “context” or class that was previously examined: (1) those with the highest percentage of representation and (2) those with the lowest—or no—

representation. For example, in images where an individual is shown teaching children, females (77%) and White females (54%) have the highest representations, and males (23%) as well as Asian, Black, and Middle Eastern males (0%) have the lowest depictions. The utility of this approach is found in the fact that it opens the possibility of patterns of representation or lack of representation. In short, it helps determine if there is a particular group that is consistently shown with power. Moreover, it aids in locating if any group is perpetually absent or has the lowest rates of “power” depictions. Lastly, it serves to simplify the complex nature of the groupings. The examination of the extremes will be addressed later in the chapter, but we should first explain the other organizing principle: the bifurcation of the previous findings.

Contextual and Noncontextual: A Bifurcation

Two distinct groups emerge from the previous chapters’ findings. The first “half” of the division could be labeled “contextual” or “relational.” They are images in which power is performed in relation to another and context matters. They can be explicit or subtle in their form. Explicit contextual images include such images as individuals teaching or those in regalia handing out degrees at graduation. One should realize that some images are explicit contextual in nature but do not have an individual directly interacting with other individuals. For example, political figures or teachers teaching to an “absent” audience are images of power but do not show any other individual within the picture. Subtle contextual images would consist of such images as pointing, using a computer, or microphone use. The subtle contextual images seemingly express power/knowledge but do so via the actions of the individual within the frame. The second “half” of the division could be called “noncontextual” and is dictated by portraits. Within

portraits, no relationship *within* the image exists, yet they nonetheless hold symbolic power.

Blending the Extremes and Bifurcations: The Theory Emerges

Using the interpretive frames of the extremes and the “contextual/noncontextual” bifurcation, one sees the theory emerge. One can begin with the “imbalance” aspect of the theory and, then, turn to show the “balance” aspect; when combined, we come to The (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online.

The Imbalanced Aspect of the Theory

The “imbalance” of power relations can be seen when looking over the extremes within the various groups. Examining both the explicit and subtle contextual images, one finds that Whites, males, and/or White males account for the highest representation in *almost* every grouping. There are only a few exceptions: (1) females (77%) and White females (54%) dominate the “teaching kids” class, (2) females (63%), Whites (61%), and White females (38%) are the highest extreme in percentage for “studying,” (3) Whites (53%) and White males/female (each has 27%) have the most representation for “computer use,” (4) students graduating are depicted most often as female (70%), White (51%), and White female (32%), and (5) females (67%), Middle Eastern individuals (36%), and Middle Eastern females (27%) dominate the “ethnic attire” group. In all other instances of contextual images, White males are the most common group depicted.

As one analyzes the aforementioned contextual pictures, one sees an initial imbalance in representation that privileges White males; however, the imbalance goes further. If we examine the “exceptions” that are provided where White males are not

centered, we find another level of pattern. In two instances—the “teaching kids” and “students graduating” groups, we find that while power is manifested for females, particularly White females, it essentially exists under erasure due to its relation to *other* images. The “teaching kids” group is subordinated to the “teaching adults” group, which is dominated by White males, and the “students graduating” group expresses much less power than the professors in regalia at the graduation who are mostly White males; thus, while, on one level, some power appears to be expressed for White females, it is always erased by similar images of White males having *more* power.

The “ethnic attire” group is another in which power relations work against women. As a group, it is not so much a manifestation of content depicting an individual with power but rather are representations that push those shown to the margin. Thus, it is not a class that any group would wish to dominate, yet Middle Eastern women do just that.

This examination of the extremes parallels the White male power narrative expressed in Chapter 4. It suggests that the institution of higher education construct online identities that “center” White males. If this was the only narrative, we would simply have an Imbalanced Theory. So, only half the story is found here. To find (im)balance, we must complete the overall theme by looking at how the general make up of images is “balanced.” As such, we should turn to address “balance.”

The Balanced Aspect of the Theory

To understand how the source reflects “balance,” we should analyze images along the “contextual/noncontextual” distinction. To show “imbalance,” we focused only on

“contextual” images. If one is to find “balance,” then one should find images that marginalize White male depictions. We find this in the “noncontextual” group.

Noncontextual images (i.e., portraits) center women and non-White individuals. White males are the most common portrait, but the symbolic significance of facial prominence “center” other groups. For portraits, women, especially Native American females (73.5%) and Black females (70%), are given much greater symbolic significance through having a higher percentage of their face shown in portraits. Not only do females have higher scores than males but Whites have a lower average facial prominence score than all racial groups with the exception of Middle Easterner individuals. Both are counter to previous literature addressing the “percent face” variable. The average facial prominence of White males is surpassed by every female subgroup (e.g., Hispanic females) with the exception of Middle Eastern females. It is also lower than Hispanic males. Within this group, then, White males are forced toward the margin. If previous literature on facial prominence is accurate, this outcome suggests that White males will be perceived as less trustworthy, less honest, and less intelligent than women and Hispanic males. Here, we see the challenge to the White male power narrative expressed in Chapter 4.

Stability in the Theory

The “imbalance” of contextual images and the “imbalance” of noncontextual images create stability in the overall source. Let us examine this stability. There are 484 “contextual” images in the source and 647 “noncontextual” portraits. Initially, one would content that the “noncontextual” should hold more “weight” than their “contextual” counterparts. This result, however, neglects to account for two aspects of these images:

(1) the conflicting narrative within the portrait group and (2) the explicit versus implicit divide.

One finds that even though there are more “noncontextual” images, the impact they have on the overall source is partially limited. First, there is a conflict in the noncontextual or portrait group. It is true that White males score low on facial prominence compared to almost every other group; however, it is also the case that White males are shown *more often* than any other group. Therefore, the assertion that noncontextual images marginalize White males must be tempered to some extent. On one side, this finding suggests power because they are not invisible or absent which is usually seen as a lack of power. On the other side, it hints that the low eminence given to the face is not an anomaly based on few cases. In short, White males are *consistently* shown with lower, facial prominence scores.

Second, this very distinction of White males having more depictions but lower facial prominence scores suggests a difference between explicit and implicit depictions. The 484 “contextual” images are explicit accounts of power. However, the 647 “noncontextual” images are both explicit (i.e., that they are shown) *and* implicit (i.e., their facial prominence). The average viewer coming to the homepage will be able to decipher and perceive the explicit representations more than the implicit ones. In short, almost no viewer would go to the pages and determine the facial prominence score of portraits found there. Thus, the explicit should hold more “weight” in the equation.

Combined, the previous assertion reaffirm the (im)balance within depictions on the college homepages. Since Foucault suggests that power is shown through the strategies and tactics of institutions, one can interpret institutions of higher education as

applying different tactics. As a strategy, colleges use explicit depictions to reify and reaffirm White male privilege. Conversely, they use implicit representations to undermine notions of White male power. Here, we see two distinct tactics, manifested in the two visual narratives of Chapter 4, applied that compete with each other.

These strategies create conflicting narratives. If one recognizes the individuals in contextual images as having power, then one would assume to find portraits of White males with high, if not the highest, facial prominence scores. This outcome, however, is not the case. If one notices the perceived, positive personality traits of those with high facial prominence scores, then one could contend that these individuals (i.e., females and non-Whites) should be shown as leaders and have power. This result, again, is not the case. This conflict between the implicit and the explicit creates further stability. As pointed out in Chapter 1, Brooker (1999) contends that “An established ‘discursive formation’ is in fact defined by the *contradictory* discourses it contains and this tolerance Foucault understands as a sign of stability rather than—as it would be understood in Marxism, for example—of conflict and potential change” (p. 67; emphasis added).

What, however, is stabilized through the (im)balanced theory narrative? I will call it, “stabilized transition.” If we return to the story constructed by graduation images, we see that it parallels the (im)balance found in the overall source. There is a sense that colleges are in a transitory moment where the commonplace White male privilege is beginning to be challenged from the margins. For example, not only are women *shown* graduating more often in images, but women *are* graduating at higher rates. If universities depicted only explicit accounts of White male power, then they would disenfranchise females and non-White individuals. Moreover, if the schools only showed

those who are not White males, then White males may be disillusioned. In order to create an online identity that appeals to the broadest range of viewers, colleges seek to depict a “stabilized transition.” This “stabilized transition” depicts White males “in power” and females and non-Whites as “gaining power.” Here, the surface structure is still dominated by White males. A significant undercurrent, implicit in nature, of the source, however, gives preference to women and non-White individuals.

The aforementioned is a slight oversimplification. Those “gaining power” are, more often than not, White and Black females and not “all individuals who are not White males.” In fact, there is one group that is perpetually, regardless of contextual or noncontextual images or implicit or explicit content, pushed further to the margin. Middle Eastern individuals are this group. The only two classes in which they do not come in *dead last* are the contextual groups of “using a camera” and “ethnic attire.” As asserted previously, one is already marginalized by being shown in the “ethnic attire” class. One could claim that Middle Eastern individuals represent the marginalized of the marginalized. Other marginalized groups are shown, from time to time, with power or gaining power, but Middle Eastern men and women are *never* depicted in this fashion. Thus, it would be accurate to assert three groups: (1) the “center” who have power and are White males, (2) those challenging the “center” and gaining power who are White and Black females, and (3) those clearly pushed to the margin who are Middle Eastern individuals.²⁰

²⁰ Notably, Native American individuals are also pushed to the periphery; however, their lack of representation may, in part, be due to being such a small demographic group.

A Preliminary Examination of the Particular

As formulated, The (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online reflects the totality of schools in the source, which means that it focuses on *the* institution of higher education rather than any particular institution or school. To assert that individual schools use this strategy of identity formation would, it seems, be a composition/division fallacy. However, we can initially test to see if the generated, descriptive theory holds at the single school level of analysis.

To see if the theory is applicable to schools rather than the institution of higher education, we need only examine the content of individual homepages to see if they reflect the pattern. Using an online random number generator, I created a random sample of five schools: East Carolina University, George Washington University, Oregon State University, University of Massachusetts at Boston, and Florida Institute of Technology.

Of the five schools randomly selected, only two of them, East Carolina University and Florida Institute of Technology, had pictures that fell into both the contextual and noncontextual frameworks. George Washington University had no images in either framework because all images were of a “place” or “thing.” This result may be an attempt to neutralize power relations that exists when showing “persons.” The University of Massachusetts at Boston had only contextual aspects of power shown. Conversely, Oregon State University had only a noncontextual depiction. Given this, we should examine the images of the two schools that have both contextual and noncontextual depictions.

Florida Institute of Technology has four images that fell within the groupings of power that emerged from the source. Three of these are contextual: (1) a White male

teaching adults, (2) a White male using a computer, and (3) a White female using a computer. One image was noncontextual and showed an Asian male with a facial prominence score of 65%. These examples give minor support to the theory's explanatory power at the particular level because they demonstrate that White males dominate the explicit, contextual accounts but do not dominate the noncontextual accounts because they are absent.

At East Carolina University, there are four “contextual” images of power and 10 “noncontextual” pictures. The “contextual” images are: (1) a White female studying, (2) a Black female, in cap and gown, graduating, (3) a Black male using a camera, and (4) a White male teaching adults. Clearly, the White male is shown with the most explicit representation of power. Within the “noncontextual” group, we find five White females, two White males, one Middle Eastern female, one Black male, and one Black female. As we examine the average facial prominence of each group, White males are the median score. Black individuals dominate the frame with both male and female exceeding 70%. Notably, the Middle Eastern female has the lowest score (61%), which reinforces the previous ideas that a three-level system of power may be at work. Combined, these pictures suggest that the tactics and strategies employed by higher education broadly conceived may, indeed, occur at individual universities.

Having theorized the results into The (Im)Balanced Theory of College Identity Formation Online, it would be pragmatic to address how this research may be appropriated by various groups and what future research could be done.

Future Possibilities

Though this work is originally intended for the communication discipline, it may have significance to a range of people and organizations. This section will address how this work may be appropriated and by whom as well as examine what future research could extend this current project. To begin, however, we should briefly note who can gain from this research.

Who Can Benefit

The first set of people who can benefit from this work are those scholars working on visual representations. In the past, researchers have had challenges when addressing an artifact with great visual breadth. Applying the grounded theory ideas of Figueroa and Clarke, one finds a means for organizing and addressing large bodies of visual images. Regardless of whether power is an issue in future research, this current work helps demonstrate that studies addressing large visual data sets can be accomplished.

The second group of people that may benefit from this work are those people assigned to select images for university homepages. Knowing that colleges select images to construct their identity, university web designers can more readily choose images that reinforce the “stabilized transition” or actively challenge it as a narrative.

A third group of individuals can also be aided by this work. Organizations, such as the National Organization of Women or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, can use the findings to further their respective agendas. Each organization would have evidence that, within explicit depictions on websites, certain groups are pushed to the margin. Here, the research has an applied dimension.

Future Research

Future researchers can use the finding and the approach in a variety of ways. First, research can continually examine whether the findings with empirical backing at the institution-level of analysis hold at the specific university level of analysis. While a preliminary examination hints that it may hold, no clear assertion can be made about individual colleges. Future work could resolve this by using the generated theory as a lens when analyzing a particular school and determine if (im)balance is present.

Second, those seeking to address the visual, online depictions of universities can replicate the study with a “new” source. They can keep the universities selected the same yet do the study at a later time. Such research would open cross-comparison and a diachronic analysis to take place. It would answer such questions as: Over time, does the institution of higher education keep the same ratio and types of depictions for various groups? Is there further evidence that (im)balance is occurring? And similar questions.

Third, organizational communication scholar and/or visual communication researchers can apply the strategies used in the current work to study the online identity formations of other institutions, groups, or organizations. They examine similar sources as Fortune 500 companies’ websites or government agencies. Future research could also shift the frame away from online depictions and look at visual representations within “traditional” media (e.g., brochures). The shift from online depictions to “traditional” ones also opens the potential to examine literature send out by universities (e.g., new student orientation packets and other public relations materials) as well as allows for comparison of online versus off-line depictions of power relations.

Fourth, future research could readdress the current source but use other

methodologies. One could create a social scientific experiment in which all source images are in a computer module that randomly selects a specific group, subjects would view the images and would be asked about their perceptions and interpretations. Though this may reinscribe the message as constructed by explicit depictions, it would also open inquiry into how viewers address or perceive the implicit aspects of the source.

Conclusion

The “stabilized transition” as constructed by colleges is a noteworthy moment in the history of online college identity formation. Given that Foucault himself analyzed the historic trends in various social institutions like the prison, one could continually examine universities’ online depictions to see the implied ideology. In short, this work creates a baseline from which to start but it also allows for future research to see if such online depictions shift toward greater “balance” or “imbalance” over time. Currently, this work contends that (im)balance is the present state of identity formation for colleges. With more research, we may not only see the historic shifts of visual representations on schools’ homepages but may also, by extension, get a “feel” for society’s own convictions.

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